

# INTERCULTURAL REMINISCENCES



IRENE CHENG

*Dr Irene Cheng was born in Hong Kong in 1904, the daughter of Sir Robert and Lady Clara Ho Tung. A pioneer in the field of education throughout her career, she earned her B.A. from the University of Hong Kong in 1925; a Master's degree from Teachers' College at Columbia University in 1929; and a Ph.D. from London University in 1936. She was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1961.*

*After many years of distinguished service as teacher, civil servant, trustee, and senior education officer in both Hong Kong and China, Dr Cheng retired to the United States in 1967, where she worked as a lecturer on Chinese culture at the University of California at San Diego and for the Adult Education Service of the San Diego Unified School District. She continues to reside in San Diego today near her daughter.*

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INTERCULTURAL  
REMINISCENCES

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Hong Kong Baptist University



## CONTENTS

	Acknowledgement	<i>i</i>
	Preface	<i>iv</i>
	Foreword	<i>vi</i>
	Editor's Introduction	<i>viii</i>
ONE	Family	<i>1</i>
TWO	Home	<i>28</i>
THREE	Childhood	<i>43</i>
FOUR	Our First School	<i>74</i>
FIVE	A Second School	<i>92</i>
SIX	Hong Kong University	<i>104</i>
SEVEN	University Graduation	<i>117</i>
EIGHT	Postgraduate Travels	<i>143</i>
NINE	Lingnan	<i>171</i>
TEN	Doctoral Studies	<i>188</i>
ELEVEN	Marriage	<i>213</i>
TWELVE	War	<i>244</i>
THIRTEEN	Escape	<i>270</i>
FOURTEEN	Return	<i>297</i>
FIFTEEN	Schools Inspector	<i>317</i>
SIXTEEN	Tai Shing	<i>350</i>
SEVENTEEN	San Diego	<i>370</i>
EIGHTEEN	Return to the New China	<i>384</i>
NINETEEN	Special Education in China	<i>414</i>
TWENTY	Epilogue	<i>432</i>



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

**M**y acknowledgement is somewhat different from those found at the front of most books for a special reason: because I want to give thanks for my life, as well as for the writing of this book.

First I wish to give thanks to my parents for my very existence. I was a delicate child and went through most of the children's illnesses—measles, mumps, bronchitis, and pneumonia—as well as many other illnesses.

My Mamma was an excellent nurse—by nature and also self-trained. I was told that during the early days of being married to my father, she found some good books on home nursing, and together they learnt specialised subjects. Mamma studied the English language and became proficient in it, so that she was able to give clear reports to the attending doctor and carry out the doctor's instructions and advice. Mamma became an excellent nurse, helped many friends and acquaintances, and probably saved my life many times. She also helped me by always emphasising the importance of getting a good education, and the value of travelling.

I want to thank my father for having worked so hard to accumulate his wealth—often at the expense of his own health. As we were growing up (between 1910-1915 approximately), he was very ill and bedridden, and practically everyone expected him to die. But Mamma prayed many times a day before every meal, because she had all of us children and she needed to have him alive. She asked her Buddhas and they answered her prayers and let him recover. She taught us to pray for his health so that he could eat, sleep, and walk. He lived

## Acknowledgement

till he was in his 90's, and he could do everything.

I am also grateful to my teachers and university professors, many of whom went out of their way to guide me and help me make the most of my opportunities. In particular, I wish to sincerely thank the following: my residential family tutor of Chinese, Mr K.U. Chiu, who was like a father figure to all of us, teaching us the simple Chinese classics, telling us many funny Chinese stories, and also taking our pulse and prescribing Chinese herbal medicines when we were ill. He lived in our home but had his food brought to his room. He went home only once a year, during the Ching Ming season in the spring, to visit the graves of his ancestors. During the summer, his son would come and live in his room with him for a few days and became a good friend to us.

Of all my teachers, Miss N. W. Bascombe did the most for us. She could and did teach almost every subject in the curriculum. Although the university did not accept women students then, in 1918 she studied the matriculation requirements very carefully and advised us to take all the required subjects, with a hope that the university would accept us. The subject that seemed to be most important was mathematics, which many girls' schools did not offer, but Eva and I took and passed all of the subjects, even though Miss Bascombe was not allowed the time to teach us geometry and trigonometry. We worked the examples and looked up the answers to see if we had done them correctly, and she went through our written work carefully and pointed out where we had made mistakes. Two other members of the D.G.S. staff also helped us a lot: the headmistress Miss Skipton and Miss Ferguson. At the Sheung Fu Girls' School, we were most indebted to brothers K.S. Lo and S.F. Lo.

At the University of Hong Kong, I was most grateful for the guidance of Professors W. Brown, R.K.M. Simpson, W. Vickers, and Mr Romanis Lee, who continued to guide me after I had graduated and he had retired to England. Mr. Lee thought that I might go in for industrial welfare work, so he introduced me to his many lady friends, who put me up when I went to various well-known factories in England that provided good welfare services, including Rowntree's and Cadbury's Chocolates, Players Tobacco, and others. I was shown around the factories and carefully told the details of their welfare systems. I wish of course to thank the people who served as my hosts and helpers in all those years. I also wish to thank the other professors, lecturers, and all who helped me when I was a student in London during 1927 and 1929-36 and in New York City in 1928-29.

## PREFACE

present generation, no matter how far and wide, with their ancestors and their origin.

I am sure readers who experienced life from the 1930's through the 1970's in Hong Kong and mainland China will enjoy the book with much interest and nostalgia. Many of the lost treasures and traditional values of Chinese culture, such as the closeness of the family clan, the observation of filial piety, respect for the elderly, love and care for the weak, and so forth, are dearly held by Dr Cheng. The book will also appeal to younger readers, for it contains informative and interesting material that I am sure will easily arouse curiosity in the young minds.

The publication of this book at the dawn of the 21st century is indeed opportune. On one hand it presents reminiscences of the "life and times" from the past century, and on the other hand it provides an epilogue during the closing days of Hong Kong as a British colony.

Hong Kong Baptist University is most honoured to be the publisher of this book, and it is fitting that our David C Lam Institute for East-West Studies has assumed the task. The Institute has been established with the aim of promoting understanding between the East and the West, and we believe that this remarkable piece of work, *Intercultural Reminiscences*, will contribute much to this cause.

Daniel C W Tse  
President and Vice Chancellor  
Hong Kong Baptist University  
8 May 1997

## FOREWORD

**A**lthough we rarely manage to see each other nowadays, my husband S.P. and I regard Irene Cheng as one of our best friends. I have been a real admirer of hers ever since the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, when the ladies in Hong Kong started organising themselves into several volunteer relief groups. Irene, who had just come home from her position at the Ministry of Education in Nanjing, was immediately recruited to serve as the English General Secretary of the leading association, the Hong Kong Chinese Women's Relief Association. The ladies decided to establish three orphanages for war orphans. Irene became the unpaid Superintendent of all three orphanages in Hong Kong and represented them on the Ladies' Committee. She shouldered her duties energetically and efficiently.

After the war Irene and I both fought hard for women's rights in Hong Kong. She served as the only woman on a government-appointed board assigned to study "Chinese Law and Custom." She was also dedicated to taking care of the handicapped. Together with other volunteers, Irene helped establish the Mental Health Association of Hong Kong. They successfully urged the Education Department to establish a Special Schools Section and to provide education, training, and care for physically and mentally handicapped persons, especially children. Although she came from a wealthy family, Irene never indulged in luxuries. Instead she persevered in seizing opportunities for education and specialized training in these fields for herself and for others. She became active in the World Federation for Mental Health and was on its executive board for many years. She has also been an active member of the New Education Fellowship and other prominent international

## FOREWORD

organisations.

In a tremendous personal misfortune, Irene became bride, a mother, and a widow within 20 months, but she rose to the occasion. She brought her fatherless child to live with her mother-in-law, as is proper according to traditional Chinese custom. They were supported by her husband's brother for less than a year, then she found herself a job at the Kailan Mining Administration as an English secretary so that she could support her daughter, their amah, and herself during the war years.

Once World War II ended and conditions gradually improved, Irene came home to Hong Kong to visit her aged father, performing secretarial and other duties for him. She waited for more than a year for a new post at the Education Department and became the first Senior Woman Education Officer—a position she held until she had to "retire" at the age of 55.

After returning to London to study more educational psychology, Irene came back to Hong Kong. She taught at the True Light Middle School for a year and was then asked by the Confucian Academy to become the first principal of their new Confucian Tai Shing School, which was subsidized by the government.

In 1967 she gave up this job to go to America so as to live near her only child, June, who had then married and settled abroad. I have the honour and pleasure of being June's godmother. Following in her mother's footsteps, June has for several decades been an outstanding math teacher at an excellent secondary school in California.

After several years in various writing courses, Irene produced a book about her parents and Hong Kong entitled *Clara Ho Tung: A Hong Kong Lady, Her Family and Her Times* in 1976. It was very well received by the public both in Hong Kong and elsewhere. In 1983 she then started writing these *Intercultural Reminiscences*. At long last it is finished, and we all congratulate Irene on her accomplishment.

Dr Ellen Li , C.B.E., L.L.D.



## EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

**T**he narrative that follows is not intended to be an authoritative history of Hong Kong but merely a collection of personal, intercultural reminiscences of Dr Irene Cheng, *née* Ho, O.B.E., B.A. (HK) M.A. (Col.) Ph.D (Ldn.), who was born into its vibrant community at the beginning of the 20th century. Through her eyes the reader may gain some personal insight into the way things were and, with the passing of time, how they have changed. This is primarily a story of people, their culture and behaviour. They were predominantly Chinese, but under the influence of the British who administered the tiny colony in which they lived. This was the confluence of two unique cultures, and Irene Cheng eventually came to understand and appreciate the meeting point from a wider perspective than most, since she is Eurasian: neither Chinese nor British, but both.

Irene Cheng's main reason for recording her experiences is not simply to tell her own story but to illustrate the "life and times" of which she was a part. Some of the events she covers might be regarded as family trivia, and her recollections of more widely known events have no doubt been influenced by the perspective from which she viewed them. However, throughout this work she has written it all down as honestly as she can in the belief that, collectively, it forms another small brick in the wall of knowledge surrounding the birth and development of an unusually resilient society.

Irene Cheng is well qualified indeed to act as a Hong Kong chronicler. She was born in 1904, the fifth daughter of Sir Robert Ho Tung, one of the wealthiest and most influential Eurasians of the time. It is testament to Irene Cheng's determination and sense of purpose that at

the age of 17 in 1921 she became the first woman student to attend full-time lectures at the University of Hong Kong, until then a strictly male preserve. Dr Cheng's subsequent academic achievements provided the foundation for her to become a noted teacher and educator. But it was the humanitarian side of her nature that led her to become a champion of the underprivileged, an advocate for women's equality, and an active supporter of international understanding.

At the age of 80, in the twilight years of an unusually active and useful life, Irene Cheng discovered the computer—which allowed her to embark on possibly the final stage of life's great adventure. After teaching herself how to use the device, she began to type in these *Intercultural Reminiscences*, a task that was to continue for the next fourteen years. Upon completion, her notes and prose comprised some 650,000 words. She insisted that the manuscript was neither a history nor an autobiography but a compilation of recollections. She had felt compelled to tell the younger generation something of what she had experienced and what she thought and felt at the time or thereafter.

The result of her endeavours will be of interest to Hong Kong Chinese and to the Europeans who have made the territory their home. It will also, in no small measure, provide outsiders with a peek into both the private lives of Hong Kong people as they were and what motivated them in their efforts to make their lives better. To share Irene Cheng's experiences of the colony, it would be easier if the reader had a rudimentary understanding of the economic and political forces that brought Hong Kong into being and subsequently influenced the lifestyles of the whole community. It is to be hoped that the reader who knows the story of Hong Kong's foundation will bear with this extended editors' introduction, which provides a potted history of the region for those who do not know it. This is compiled from references to a number of authoritative works on the subject and, indeed, to Dr Irene Cheng herself. It should be sufficient for the immediate purpose of providing the reader with a background to her entry upon the scene and the events that occurred thereafter.

For centuries China had isolated itself from the rest of the world and was, to all intents and purposes, self-sufficient. It wanted neither foreign goods nor foreign influence. However, in the 16th century European seafaring nations began to have other ideas. By that time they had developed the necessary maritime technology for their sailing ships to

reach the distant China coast with a degree of regularity. They saw this as a means to develop a new and profitable trade.

China was the source of fine porcelain, silk, and tea, all of which were to find a ready market in Europe. The problem was that in return Europe could initially supply little that China wanted, even if it could overcome the country's official resistance to trading with foreigners. As a result, the development of trade with the vast Chinese market was slow in meeting the original expectations of European merchants. However, it still attracted considerable interest from various nations, including Portuguese, Dutch, Danish, Spanish, American, and of course British traders. At no time did they consider the Chinese easy to deal with. Lengthy negotiations with government officials to obtain trading permits and such would often lead nowhere or be delayed indefinitely to await the consideration of some "higher authority." Having overcome this hurdle, merchants still had to satisfy seemingly endless demands for import taxes, customs duties, measuring charges, linguists' fees, and cumshaw. The foreigners found the whole procedure totally alien and frustrating.

The Chinese saw the situation from a different perspective. In their opinion the Middle Kingdom was the centre of the civilised world and, consequently, had sovereignty over all other nations. And indeed China had its own tried and tested methods of conducting business and trade. Therefore its rulers felt no compulsion to satisfy the impatience of foreigners or to pander to their particular methods of doing business, which at times seemed to border on aggression. Overseas trade was a matter of considerable importance to the Chinese, requiring sanction by the emperor and the involvement of a chain of government officials of various ranks. It was not something that could be hurried. Furthermore, it made good business sense for the Chinese to gain the best possible returns for their merchandise and to ensure that everyone involved reaped maximum reward. To the despair of the foreigners, for whom speed was synonymous with success, this sometimes led to long drawn-out negotiations and the levy of all manner of handling fees. However, it is worthy of note that despite their many frustrations the foreign merchants still found the exercise worthwhile and persisted in bringing their ships halfway around the world to trade along the China coast.

In the early days the balance of trade favoured China, but during the 18th century opium began to gain in importance as a commodity for importation into the country, and this soon tipped the scales in favour of the foreigners. The British were the major suppliers, obtaining opium

cargoes from their colonial possessions in India. By the latter part of the century, trade in opium had become a major enterprise in itself. This was much to the consternation of the ruling Manchu government, since by then opium was being purchased for silver bullion and the trade had reached such proportions that it was depleting national reserves.

In the beginning it is doubtful that there was much consideration given to the morality of the trade. It did not contravene British laws at the time, since few restrictions were imposed upon those who had the temerity to develop a profitable trade in such far-flung regions as the Orient. As for the Chinese, initially they seem to have regarded opium as a luxury item. But this attitude was soon to change as opium addiction became rife throughout the country. Accordingly, the importation of opium into China was formally prohibited in 1796 by imperial edict. However, this caused an immediate rise in the commodity's price, making it even more profitable to handle. Thus the supply continued through an illegal network, with avaricious foreign traders working hand-in-hand with corrupt Chinese officials.

Guangzhou, on the Pearl River, was a convenient centre for those engaged in the opium trade since it had long been an entrepôt. It was located in an outlying coastal region of the Chinese empire that was difficult for the government to police effectively from its administrative capital, Beijing. The adjacent China coastline was infamous for its piracy and local smuggling operations. For some time the British operated "godowns" or warehouses for the storage of opium at the nearby Portuguese enclave of Macau. British ships would often transfer their cargoes to Chinese junks in the Pearl river estuary, from which the opium would be transported north along the China coast or through the inland system of rivers and canals.

At the height of the opium trade, foreign traders were allowed to establish warehouses, or "factories" as they were called, along the waterfront within the city of Guangzhou itself. Many Chinese officials connived in this massive smuggling operation and bribery was rife. Nevertheless, opium was an expensive and profitable commodity to handle for those who were sufficiently corrupt to be involved in its importation and distribution. The growth and magnitude of the opium trade can be gauged from the fact that in 1838, within the port of Guangzhou alone, roughly 30 million taels of silver—or about 1,200 tons of the precious metal—were spent by the Chinese to purchase the drug.

China was now facing a real economic crisis. One of the better-

known Chinese officials who was deeply concerned by the extent of the trade was Lin Tse-hsu, governor of the Hu-Kuang Provinces in central and southern China. He wrote to the Emperor in Beijing advising that if the opium traffic was not stopped, in the event of a war there would be no silver to pay for it and no soldiers to fight it. Opium was not only draining the country of silver, it was also ruining the health of the people. In his own area of jurisdiction Governor Lin confiscated and destroyed 3,500 opium pipes and more than 12,000 taels of opium gum.

Determined to put a stop to the illicit traffic, the Emperor sent Lin to Guangzhou in March 1839 as imperial commissioner for the two Guang provinces, Guangdong and Guangxi, with full powers to halt the opium traffic at its very source. One of Commissioner Lin's first moves was to order all foreign merchants to surrender their stocks of the drug, an edict that was initially rejected by the British traders. However, they were eventually forced to submit after he denied them the right to leave their factory enclave, forbade Chinese to work for them, and cut off their sources of food and water. Shortly thereafter, 20,391 chests of opium were confiscated and destroyed by the application of quicklime in two large troughs built specially for the purpose at the seaside village of Humen in the Pearl River estuary. In a gesture of finality, the useless residues were tossed into the sea.

The British traders left Guangzhou and withdrew to their land base at Macau. But this did not put them completely beyond Chinese jurisdiction or provide them with a safe haven from which to pursue their illegal trading activities. The Portuguese certainly had no wish to become embroiled in such sensitive matters, particularly since their tiny Macanese possession was tenuously held through imperial decree. Commissioner Lin made the position clear by stationing detachments of the Chinese army just north of the Macau border. As a consequence, in the summer of 1839 the entire British merchant fleet together with its trading population left Macau and crossed the wide Pearl river estuary. It established itself 40 miles eastward by anchoring in the natural harbour created by Hong Kong Island and the mainland. This had previously been used by British ships as a safe but temporary anchorage. Naturally, dispatches were sent to the British government in London advising of the situation, and the matter was brought before Parliament.

In the opinion of Lord Palmerston, then the British foreign secretary, it was time to establish Sino-British commercial relations on a sound basis. Through government channels he demanded either a



formal commercial treaty between the two countries or the cession of a small island off the China coast where the British could build a trading colony, free from threats under the British flag and, of course, British law. An expeditionary force arrived in Chinese waters in June 1840 to back these demands with naval firepower. Thus began the first Opium War, which lasted from then until 1842.

Hong Kong first became a British settlement in 1841 and in the following year was formally ceded as a British colony through the Treaty of Nanjing. The colony occupied Hong Kong Island, the peninsula of Kowloon on the mainland opposite, and Stonecutters' Island nearby. This 36 square miles of territory provided an essential land base from which to conduct trade, together with a deep harbour to accommodate ocean-going vessels. The harbour and surrounding high hills provided them with a relatively safe haven from the turbulent storms and typhoons for which the South China Sea is notorious. Hong Kong was theoretically ceded by China to Britain in perpetuity, but considering the hostile conditions under which the colony came into being it was natural that the Chinese accepted its existence with some rancour.

As for Lin Tse-hsu, he was blamed by the Emperor for mishandling the suppression of the opium trade and was banished to Yili, a small outpost in northwest China where he continued to serve his country. He was later pardoned, but by then his health had suffered and he died on his way home. Posthumously, Lin became a national hero who today is honoured for his patriotism not only in China but by the many Chinese communities scattered around the globe. Irene Cheng has a personal interest in Lin Tse-hsu because she married one of his great-great-grandsons, H.H. Cheng, a direct descendant of one of the famous patriot's three daughters. Dr Cheng refers to this in the book when she describes her first trip to Beijing in 1926, during which she met her husband-to-be.

Initially, the colony of Hong Kong presented a daunting prospect. The main island's craggy, mountainous terrain provided the British with limited areas upon which to build a trading port. Early buildings, for housing and the storage of goods, were constructed along a narrow strip of shore facing the harbour. But this soon needed to be extended by reclaiming the beach to allow for further expansion. Earlier Lord Palmerston had described Hong Kong contemptuously as "a barren island with hardly a house on it," and he no doubt felt that he had wrested an otherwise useless piece of real estate from the Chinese. The island was

not totally barren, however, because a few thousand farmers and fishermen, who lived in villages scattered along its coastline, survived by subsistence farming and shore fishing.

Created out of adversity, Hong Kong continued to be an aggravation to China even as it developed into a permanent hub for international shipping and commerce. The British persisted with the import of opium, which led in 1856 to a second opium war with China that lasted until 1858. Throughout the remainder of the century, even though opium gave way to other trading commodities, disputes still persisted between the British administrators of the free port and the Chinese government, which complained that goods were entering China through the colony in avoidance of import taxes.

Despite considerable disagreement between China and Hong Kong at diplomatic levels, the colony prospered. In 1898 Britain negotiated a 99-year lease for an additional tract of land to be called the New Territories. This comprised an area of the mainland beyond the Kowloon Peninsula together with 135 islands, totalling 165 square miles. By the end of the 19th century, the colony had grown from a simple trading base into a cosmopolitan city with some of the finest European buildings in the Orient housing its foreign commercial enterprises and their executives.

Attracted by its prosperity, many Chinese crossed over from the mainland to set up businesses in Hong Kong or to obtain employment there. It was they who formed the nucleus of what was to become an integral and essential sector of the colony's bustling community. Many had brought brides from China, which allowed family life to flourish much in the way it had done for millennia in the motherland. The Chinese lived mainly in a separate downtown district, although some of their wealthier compatriots set up fine homes in the Mid-Levels away from the hubbub of urban sprawl. Records put Hong Kong's population in 1903 at 18,581 Europeans and 325,631 Chinese. Trade was flourishing, as during the same year 14,489 ships entered and cleared the port with a total tonnage of 19,018,411. An indication of the colony's rate of expansion in the early part of the 20th century is the fact that between 1903 and 1919 the Chinese population doubled.

This, then, was the scenario into which Irene Cheng was born and spent her early years. She remembers it as if it was yesterday. There were no buses and few motor cars. Most of the thoroughfares, such as Caine Road

near her home, were not built for vehicular traffic and consequently were fairly narrow. Indeed, many of them subsequently became one-way streets when they were eventually developed for modern vehicles. The volume of motor traffic that existed when she was young can be gauged from the registration plate on her father's first car: 81. The electric tramway began service in 1904, the year of Irene Cheng's birth. This provided transport for those travelling from Central district to Happy Valley parallel with the island's busy northern shoreline, and was segregated in European and Chinese sections. The Star Ferry was operating between Central, on Hong Kong Island, and Tsim Sha Tsui in Kowloon across the harbour, which was then just being developed.

Rickshaws and sedan chairs were a common means of getting about. These were manhandled by coolies mainly from the Hok-lo group, a branch of the Chinese race well known for their physical strength. Irene Cheng recalls that use of the word "coolie" in this context is by no means derogatory. It derives literally from the words "bitter strength" in recognition of the hard work a labourer must perform to earn his living. The Peak tram was operating, and its cable-drawn cars had been in service since 1888. This provided a means for Europeans and their servants to travel between Central district's waterfront commercial centre and their houses on top of the mountain that rises above it. Only the elite of the European community were permitted to reside on the Peak, and at that time it was forbidden for Chinese to take up residency there.

It was a steep, gruelling climb of more than 1,000 feet to the residential area on the Peak, and a motor road was not built until Irene Cheng's university days in the early 1920s. By then, the racial barriers had begun to ease. She and her elder sister Eva did not have the use of a car, so every morning their rickshaw coolies would collect them from their hilltop home and take them to the top of Hatten Road, from which they made their way down to the university on foot. The steep descent took roughly 45 minutes. Occasionally, they would also ride the Peak tram to the bottom station and then go by rickshaw or taxi to the university.

In those days street lamps were lit by gas, and in the evenings and mornings they would be turned on or off by a lamplighter. He carried a stout pole fitted with a hook that enabled him to reach up to a ring that controlled the gas mantle flame. Some of the richer homes were later lit by electricity, as were a number of streets in the commercial area of the

city. There were relatively few telephones at that time. For the Peak house in which Irene Cheng lived, the telephone number was 8. The telephone number for the family's Mid-Levels house farther down the mountain towards Central district was 59.

Coinage echoed the cosmopolitan nature of the colony. The Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank circulated banknotes and coins in denominations starting at \$1 and also brought in specially minted coins from London made of silver and valued at 50 cents, 20 cents, 10 cents, and 5 cents. There was also a copper one-cent piece in circulation. The Mexican silver dollar, which was then still in regular use, was worth the equivalent of roughly one shilling and threepence sterling or US\$0.50. This coin had been legal tender in Hong Kong since 1869 and was popular among the Chinese because the Middle Kingdom's national currency standard was based on silver. Many Mexican coins had been defaced or chopped due to the Chinese habit of cropping their edges or drilling a hole through the middle so they could be strung. As a result, silver currency was invariably dealt with by weight (the tael or catty) and not by coin count.

The lowest denomination of all was a brass and copper coin known simply as "cash," which was worth about one-tenth of a cent. This thin coin was about the size of an American quarter and had a square hole through the centre. Cash came mainly from China, and each coin bore the name of the Emperor in whose reign it was minted. Later, Hong Kong did mint some "cash" of its own, but these coins were smaller and never totally superseded those of mainland origin. In addition to their face value, "cash" were also used as lucky tokens. The Chinese tied them together on flat sticks with red string to form a cruciform of some 50 to 100 coins. Even today, these are still given to guests, particularly children, at special occasions such as birthdays for elderly people (which are celebrated every tenth year) or weddings. It may seem surprising that these small coins could, in those days, purchase anything at all. However, when Irene Cheng was a child, she could buy a portion of roasted peanuts from a roadside stall for just a few "cash."

Irene Cheng believes that everyone has special memories related to world events and how these affected their families and the community around them. One of her earliest recollections was the death of King Edward VII in 1910. She was six at the time, but can recall that she and her sisters wore black hair ribbons and were dressed in sombre clothing. It was a serious event for a young child because the whole

## EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

family was in mourning, and that day they went to church to attend a memorial service. Another dramatic event of the time was when China became a republic on January 12, 1912. With the fall of the Manchu Dynasty, all Chinese men cut off their queues, sometimes referred to as "pigtails." Previously they had been forced to wear them by the Manchurian rulers of China. As a child Irene Cheng often discussed the event with her sister Eva, who was 15 months her senior and could remember it better. Their old teacher, Mr K.U. Chiu, used to tell them he was "pleased to be rid of the queue because it was a complete nuisance and always got in the way."

As often happens, the memory of one event is sharpened by recollections of another. The demise of the Manchu Dynasty coincided with the death of Paw Paw, Irene Cheng's maternal grandmother, on Chinese New Year's Eve in 1912. This, she believes, was when she first came to appreciate the position of reverence accorded to the older members of a Chinese family. Of course, during her early years, Irene Cheng was brought up to act and think as a Chinese. Throughout these pages, the reader will be able to follow this gracious lady as she traces her memories back to the time when she became familiar with European ways and learnt the value of blending the best of both cultures. In many ways her story reflects the way in which the population of Hong Kong has tackled life: with grit and determination in the face of adversity to make a modern economic and social success out of life on a "barren island."

It has been our privilege to work with Irene Cheng during the past two years to judiciously, with empathy and understanding, bring her manuscript down to book size. It became a labour of love as we came to know her personally and her family and friends through the pages of *Intercultural Reminiscences*. We hope readers will enjoy the book as much as we have.

FRANK MURDOCH  
and IAN WATSON  
Hong Kong, 1997



## Family

**I**t is no doubt natural that my earliest intercultural reminiscences relate to my family and closest friends. Although we were Eurasians, ostensibly we were brought up in the Chinese tradition. We spoke Cantonese at home, honoured Chinese festivals, and lived according to the lunar calendar. Still, Hong Kong at the time was becoming cosmopolitan, and many Chinese families were accepting Western influences. Therefore Western dress and the English language were becoming more popular, particularly among the younger members of Chinese society in the territory. Looking back, I realise that these trends were preparing the new generation to play an increasingly active role in the international city that Hong Kong was becoming.

We had three parents: my father, Sir Robert Ho Tung; my mother, Lady Clara Ho Tung (née Cheung), whom we were taught to call Mamma; and father's first wife, Lady Ho Tung or Lady Margaret (née Mak), whom we called Mother. However, to avoid any confusion, I shall generally refer to Father's first wife as Lady Margaret. Father was born on December 23, 1862, the first year of Emperor Tung Chi's reign. Lady Margaret was born in 1865 and Mamma in 1875, the first year of Emperor Guang Shu's reign. Father married Lady Margaret in 1881, but she remained childless. This was probably because she had a uterine tumour that had been diagnosed in America quite early in her life. Surgery might have helped, but she refused to be operated upon. The tumour did not bother her most of the time, but during the final years of her life it caused her considerable suffering.

In traditional Chinese thinking it was a serious matter for Father not to have any offspring. As the saying goes: "There are three kinds of

unfilial behaviour and, of these, the worst is to have no heir." Consequently, in accordance with recognised Chinese custom, Father's younger brother, Third Uncle Ho Fook, was obliged to allow his eldest son, Ho Wing (Ho Sai-wing), to be adopted into our branch of the family. From then on my family regarded him as the eldest son. He even had to call his own parents Uncle and Aunt. The transfer took place around 1889, when the boy was nominally seven by Chinese calculation, which meant that he was in the seventh lunar year of his life. However, because he was born only four days before Chinese New Year, he was really just over five years old.

Father and Lady Margaret still wanted to have children of their own, if possible, so Father took a concubine whose surname was Chau. This was also according to Chinese custom and fully approved by the Laws of the Qing Dynasty, which at that time were officially recognised in Hong Kong. The woman thus became a secondary spouse (tsip) to the husband, and a subsidiary mother (shu mu) to any children of the wife (tsai) born either before or after her entry into the family. These children would be taught to call her Ah Jeh (Elder Sister), which was the appropriate way of addressing the concubine of one's father. Father and Lady Margaret had naturally hoped that this concubine would bear him some children, preferably a son. But at first she, too, remained childless.

Although Mamma had been born in Hong Kong, her father took his family to Shanghai where he worked for the Chinese Maritime Customs. He was later transferred to Kiukiang, farther up the Yangtse River, to take charge of the customs office there. He died in 1892 after a short illness, and Mamma was thoroughly heartbroken. It was said that she mourned and missed him so much that for a long time she never left home. However, during this period, as there were many books around the house, she taught herself to read Chinese. Mamma's parents had actually sent her to school when she was younger, but she had not liked the regimen so they allowed her to stay home.

Burying the deceased in their native town is a traditional Chinese custom. Accordingly, one year after Grandfather's death, his widow, accompanied by Mamma and her nine-year-old younger brother Gai, brought his remains to Hong Kong so that he could be buried in his birthplace. Grandfather was the brother of Lady Margaret's mother, who had died long before. But since Chinese tend to keep in close contact with their relatives, Lady Margaret noticed that her younger cousin, Mamma, was "good, intelligent, and attractive" although quite

shy. She decided to seek her aunt's permission to allow her daughter to marry Father as a Ping Ts'ai (Equal Wife). Lady Margaret promised to treat Mamma as a sister, with absolute equality, and confirmed her verbal request with a letter to Mamma's mother.

After their arranged betrothal, Father and Mamma were married in Hong Kong in February 1895. The wedding was conducted in a full traditional Chinese ceremony, with Father wearing the double red sash and with a red sedan chair sent to fetch the bride. My two mothers continued to call each other Elder Cousin and Younger Cousin, with Father known to them as Second Young Master, in accepted Chinese style. Mamma often mentioned that she got on well with Father's mother, who treated her just like a daughter. However, her mother-in-law died a year after Mamma married Father.

My sister Victoria (Vic) was born in June 1897 when Father was already 35 years old. In those days 35 was regarded as being quite late for a Chinese person to have his first-born. Everyone was delighted, of course—Father, Mamma, and Lady Margaret—but especially our maternal Grandma whom we called P'aw P'aw, the correct Chinese form of address for this relative. Grandma and Vic were tremendously attached to each other, right up until Grandma's death in 1912. Vic remembers clearly that as a little girl, when they ventured forth in sedan chairs, she always preferred to sit in Grandma's chair if possible. When there was a large dinner party, Grandma would bring Vic along to sit with her and the other old ladies. They all liked Vic because she was so sweet and well behaved. Since all the grown-ups doted on her, Vic had a very happy childhood. She was named Victoria Jubilee because she was born in the Queen's Diamond Jubilee year. When we later studied English history, we learned the vivid story of how in 1837 Queen Victoria, still in her late teens, was called upon by the minister of state and told that she had become Queen. By 1897 Queen Victoria had reigned for 60 years and Hong Kong, by then a well-established British colony, enthusiastically participated in the celebrations.

Fifteen months after Vic's birth, my brother Henry was born. He was a bright, good-looking, and lovable child, and everyone idolised him. Unfortunately, he was not destined to live long. Chinese compare children who live only an exceedingly short life to the night-flowering ceres or epiphyllum blossom. These flowers are beautiful, exude a wonderful fragrance, and are admired by all who view them, but fade and die within a few hours.

In the late 1800s, attitudes and events within mainland China were destined to have a direct effect on the lives of Hong Kong Chinese families. China was still ruled by the Manchu Emperors of the Qing Dynasty, and people referred to their chronological years as the "n-th year in the reign of emperor so-and-so." In 1895 China, a huge country, lost the first Sino-Japanese War to her tiny island neighbour. Many Chinese scholars and statesmen were furious, and some demanded that China introduce reforms in order to strengthen itself. Among the most vociferous of the critics was a Cantonese scholar by the name of Kang Yu-wei, who sent many petitions on the subject to Emperor Guang Shu. The Emperor was genuinely impressed by these missives and on a number of occasions summoned Kang to visit him at court. Acting upon Kang's advice, the Emperor issued a whole series of edicts and introduced many changes, later known as the Hundred Days Reforms.

In Chinese history, these reforms are referred to by the name of the year (Wu Shu), according to the "60-year cycle." Unfortunately, when his aunt, the Dowager Empress, learned of the reforms she stopped them all and confined the Emperor to his quarters. Kang's six co-workers, including his own brother, were beheaded. Kang was more fortunate because the Emperor had immediately asked him to leave the imperial court and try to get help from abroad, and so the British authorities engineered Kang's escape to Shanghai. Father read about all this in the newspapers. With the assistance of the British Consul in Shanghai, he invited Kang together with his family and retinue to stay at Idlewild, our family home in Hong Kong. Accompanied by a few friends, Father met the vessel at quayside on its arrival from Shanghai. He greeted Kang who, for his own safety, spent the first week of his sojourn in Hong Kong at the police barracks. Afterwards he and his family moved to Idlewild, where they became guests of the family for a couple of weeks before moving on to Japan.

Before he left, Kang wrote in Chinese calligraphy a beautiful set of four small scrolls thanking my parents for their kindness and hospitality. The scrolls mentioned the good advice and assistance extended to him and also praised Father for his patriotism. Mamma often mentioned the Kang family visit, which coincided with the birth of Henry, who was just a week old at the time. During that time she became close friends with Kang's two eldest daughters, especially the younger one who was then not married. This girl later became a student at Columbia University in New York and was probably one of the first

Chinese women to be enrolled at an American institution of higher education.

As fate would have it, the Kang family came into my life once again in 1942 when as a new widow with a dependent child I found myself in Beijing. An elderly lady who had allowed us to live in her home spoke of a good friend of hers, Madame Lo, who was formerly Kang Tung-bi, second daughter of the well-known reformer, Kang. I immediately recognised this to be Mamma's good friend of whom we had all heard so much as children. When Madame Lo was made aware that I was in Beijing she immediately arranged a lunch for me and thereafter came to regard me as her god-daughter.

At the close of the 19th century, on December 31, 1899, a second daughter, Daisy, was born to my parents. Since our family's lives were regulated by the Chinese lunar calendar instead of the Gregorian record of time, we always celebrated our birthdays accordingly. Thus Daisy's birth occurred on the 29th day of the 11th month. None of us children realised the significance of that date to Europeans, being the last day of the century as well as New Year's Eve according to the western calendar. I only realised this fact when writing my book on Mamma about 80 years later. In the larger editions of the Chinese Red Almanac, there is usually a section that gives the corresponding solar and lunar dates for each year, up to a total of 80 or 100 years. Mamma told us that soon after Daisy was born, Father came into the room and asked whether the child was a boy or a girl. When told it was a girl, he exclaimed: "Another girl!" Feeling that he was disappointed, Mamma replied: "You may expect that I shall be having many more girls, and if you don't want girls you had better not have any more children!" As was usual, they conversed together in Chinese.

Years later, I attended a lecture on mental health, one of a series run by the Tavistock Clinic in London. The psychiatrist noted that "the first daughter is forgiven for being a girl, but the second daughter is never forgiven." How true this was in Daisy's case, especially being born into a Chinese family where there is such heavy emphasis on male children and succession. Sad to say, Daisy was unfortunate in other ways as well. I believe she had adenoid problems when she was a baby. Doctors knew little about glandular troubles in those days, so nothing was done about it at the time. Some experts say that if Daisy's adenoids had been removed, it might have helped her general development. I

have always felt sorry for her because in today's parlance she would have been classified as a "backward" child.

When Daisy was six months old she and Henry, who was then 20 months old, both developed pneumonia. He became very ill and died about a week later. Mamma was overcome by grief at the loss of her first-born son and eulogised his memory in many ways. On his tombstone of polished dark green marble, there is engraved a short poem in English, plus a carefully composed eulogy in Chinese. The English version is arranged like an eight-line stanza:

HENRY HO TUNG  
BORN 28th SEPTEMBER 1898  
DIED 15th MAY 1900  
SAFELY SAFELY GATHERED IN  
FAR FROM SORROW FAR FROM SIN  
NO MORE CHILDISH GRIEFS OR FEARS  
FOR THE LIFE SO YOUNG AND FAIR  
NOW HATH PASSED FROM EARTHLY CARE

The Chinese version is a long, poetic eulogy entitled "Grieving the Loss of a Son" and written in customary Chinese style. It recounts that Henry was very special and died in the third year of his life in the early summer of Geng-tsi (1900). It describes in detail the many ways in which the small boy was missed and contains classical allusions which make it a masterpiece of Chinese literary composition. The poem concludes by stating that the tombstone had been erected by the family and, at the end, gives the family title: "Long Prospering Tang of the Ho Family" (Ho Cheong Yuen Tong). In the Ancestral Hall of the Buddhist Tung Lin Kok Yuen Temple in Happy Valley, built by Mamma with money given her by Father to celebrate his golden wedding with Lady Margaret, there is a beautiful oil painting of Henry positioned on the wall together with those of our grandparents.

Mamma told us that after Henry's death she was so upset that she could not take an interest in anything. She often talked about this phase of her life and wrote about it in the autobiographical notes at the end of her travelogue. She said that Father and Lady Margaret had already booked passage for a trip to the United States and thence to England and, in due course, set sail. Father frequently wrote and telegraphed Mamma in a bid to cheer her up. Mamma later said that her sisters-in-law, Mrs Ho Fook and Mrs Ho Kom-tong, as well as other relatives and

friends all rallied to her side, but they did not succeed as she remained inconsolable over Henry's demise.

Finally, Mamma's doctor took firm control of the situation and told her: "Mrs Ho Tung, you may think you want to die, but you won't die. However, unless you pull yourself out of this state of mind you will have one of two illnesses. Either you will develop tuberculosis or have a nervous breakdown. You will have to choose between the two." Mamma told us that the doctor's dire warning woke her up to the seriousness of her condition. She did not want to have either disease and so employed sheer will-power to pull herself together. Meanwhile, Father had succeeded in persuading her to join him and Lady Margaret in England and so, in the spring of 1901, she agreed to go. Mamma arranged to take Grandma along with her as well as the two little girls, Vic and Daisy. In addition, they were accompanied by brother Gai and the adopted son Wing, who were about the same age. A Chinese amah also embarked on the voyage to help look after the children. The trip was not a total success since Grandma was not keen on travelling and Daisy began to fret and cry a good deal. As a result, it was arranged for Grandma and the servant to return home to Hong Kong with Daisy. The young men also returned with them, while Vic and Mamma stayed on in England until autumn. Grandma lovingly supervised Daisy's care and remained exceedingly fond of her throughout her childhood. It was especially unfortunate for Daisy, who was only 12, when Grandma died in February 1912.

At the same time Daisy was born, Father's concubine was six months pregnant, and in March 1900 she gave birth to a daughter, Mary. During most of Mary's life before her marriage, she was generally referred to at home by her Chinese name, Shun Jee. As the Chinese classify a concubine's children with those of a wife, Mary became Third Young Mistress in the family. Soon after Mary's birth, her mother contracted tuberculosis, a disease that was then quite prevalent in Hong Kong. Mary, however, continued to live with her mother until her death early in 1911. By then Mary was almost 11 years old, and Lady Margaret took her home to Idlewild, our house in Mid-Levels, where we had a live-in lady tutor and Chinese scholar, Miss Yim. Before moving up to the Peak, Vic, Daisy, and some of Lady Margaret's older servant-girls had all studied under Miss Yim. At Idlewild, Mary became chief student among the group of younger servants under Miss Yim's tutelage. Some of these girls learned a good deal from this unique

opportunity to acquire an education, while others did not profit much from the experience. Mary later attended a Chinese primary school and then studied at the grant-aided St Stephen's Girls' College. She was also a classmate of ours at the Sheung Fu Girls' School from 1919 to 1920. Actually, her knowledge of Chinese was much better than ours, due in part to the foundation laid by Miss Yim and in part because St Stephen's taught Chinese as a prime subject. Diocesan Girls' School, where we studied, had not yet introduced Chinese into the curriculum.

Father was in his 41st year when, much to the delight of both parents, my brother Eddie was born in March 1902. I remember Mamma telling us when we were young how glad Father had been to have this precious son born to him. Eddie was indeed "Mamma's darling and Papa's joy" and thus they began building their hopes around him. Unfortunately, when Eddie was about six months old, during the eighth moon, he became extremely ill. Our parents, especially Mamma, were thoroughly alarmed. They later realised that he could not stand Hong Kong's hot, damp climate, so Mamma took him over to the Portuguese enclave of Macau where it was a little cooler. Even there, though, she noticed that while playing on the floor, Eddie would often rest his cheek on the large, cool Chinese earthenware tiles.

Mamma brought him back to Hong Kong the following year and on the anniversary of Henry's death (17th day of the fourth moon), Eddie again became seriously ill. Uncle and Auntie Ho Fook, who had brought up ten children of their own, kindly offered to take care of him in their home. As Mamma was by then in an advanced stage of pregnancy, she gladly accepted the offer and accompanied Eddie, together with some members of her staff, to the Ho Fook residence. Eddie was greatly attached to his mother and would hardly allow anyone else to look after him. Mamma said she was afraid Eddie might die if she left him to return home to Idlewild for the new baby's birth. But she was a woman of strong will who somehow delayed the new baby's arrival for more than a month. Eva was finally delivered in late July 1903. Now, I do not know whether this "delaying tactic" was scientifically possible, but Mamma often said Eddie owed Eva a great deal because of it, especially because as soon as she was able, she left Eva in the care of other people in order to take her precious, darling son to Japan for convalescence. Mamma told and retold us these stories of her life, so that although it had happened more than a year before I was born, I can visualise it all as part of our family history.



A few months after Eva was born, and no doubt following careful consultation with Father, a wet-nurse and an amah were hired to look after her under the supervision of Paw Paw and Lady Margaret. Mamma was preoccupied with Eddie, of course, and it was hoped that his health would steadily improve in the climate of Japan, where it was less tropical and much cooler than the humid conditions encountered in Hong Kong during much of the year. Mamma used to tell us that even on board the boat taking them to Japan, Eddie would still not allow anyone else to carry him. On occasion some kind fellow-passenger would carry Mamma with the baby in her arms to help her move around the ship. The change of climate seemed to work wonders, so for a couple of years Mamma took Eddie to Japan during the summer and left Eva behind with the servants and relatives. Eddie's endless illnesses as a child explain much of the subsequent mutual attachment of mother and son during the rest of their lives.

Mamma, for her part, certainly thought that if she arranged for the infant Eva to be cared for, the baby would not suffer because of her prolonged absences. In those days neither Western nor Chinese ideas on child-rearing placed any great emphasis on the special bond that exists between mother and child. It was thought that an infant could not differentiate between the adults charged with looking after it. I had accepted these ideas all along, that is until the early 1950s when Dr Jeannie Stirrat, a mental health expert, explained that it was vital for a baby to have the constant care and attention of its natural mother, for otherwise it would feel "deprived."

Because Eddie could not stand the dank heat of Hong Kong summers, Mamma must have been happy when Father intimated that there was a group of three houses up for sale on Victoria Peak, an exclusive residential district at that time mainly reserved for Westerners. She naturally urged Father to buy them, because mean temperatures at the Peak were sometimes around 10 degrees lower than those at sea-level where the majority of the island's people lived. She felt the altitude would be better for the health of everyone, especially the children.

It was in October 1904, when Eddie was 31 months old and Eva just 15 months, that I arrived on the scene. In those days pregnant women were not advised to add calcium to their diet, and although Mamma most likely visited the family doctor regularly, her general health must have

been considerably run down due to the strain caused by Eddie's long illness and the mere fact of having three children born in less than three years. Even with my sparse knowledge of general medical matters, I believe that as a child my teeth were deficient in calcium, so I frequently had to visit the dentist. Actually, my general health was always poor when I was young as I did not seem to have much resistance to illness.

In a lighter vein, when all of us children were around one month old, Lady Margaret gave each of us a gold chain with several pendants, the central one being a little gold locket with a small diamond inset. The pendant's outer cover was also engraved with the year, month, date, and time of our birth, according to both the solar and lunar calendars. Inside, there was space for a little enamelled photograph to be inserted. Mamma would send a baby picture of each of us to Vandyke's of London, a well-known firm of photographers. They placed an enamelled miniature of the photo on the right-hand side of the locket, leaving space on the left to be used later as each of us saw fit. The locket was suspended on the chain by a fixed ring, although there were other rings on which we hung extra tiny ornaments of jade, amber, coral, or other precious stones. We children really valued these chains, although when we were young they were kept with Mamma's jewellery and only taken out for us to wear on special occasions. My daughter now has my locket and chain with one of her own childhood photographs placed there opposite mine. I hope she will always keep it in her family, as it is one of my most treasured heirlooms.

All along I had known that my lunar birthday fell on the 13th day of the ninth month. However, it was from my locket that I later learned I had been born on October 21, 1904, during the 30th year of Emperor Guang Shu's reign in the Chinese Year of the Dragon. During the early years, much of our life was regulated by the lunar calendar, as would be expected in a family that lived according to Chinese custom. One of the most important decisions that had to be made was when I should start my education. According to custom this should begin with a ceremony called the commencement of education. An auspicious day is chosen by consulting the Chinese Red Almanac to determine exactly when to begin a child's schooling and development. Even the year must be an appropriate one, because it is said that the child would otherwise never be a successful student. Some lunar years have two seasonal dates, known as Lap Chun (meaning the establishment of spring, or spring begins),

that always correspond to the solar dates of February 4th or 5th. These years are said to be especially suitable for ceremonies such as the commencement of education, or for weddings and the like. Auspicious years are those that have an intercalary month in them, such as a Chinese leap-year.

Although Eva and I went through the ceremony on the same day and she retained some vivid recollections of it, I do not remember a thing. As a young girl I wondered why I had suffered a memory lapse on such an important occasion. Years later, while studying my own copy of the almanac, I discovered that the lunar year extending from January 25, 1906, to February 12, 1907, was one with two Lap Chun days, whereas those that followed (the Blind Years) had none. It was believed that if children went through the ceremony during such a year, they would be doomed to being stupid and unsuccessful in their studies. Therefore it had been arranged for Eva and me to go through the ceremony some time towards the end of that lunar year. By then Eva was three and a half years of age, whereas I was just over two and still quite a baby. If we had not gone through the ceremony then, we would have had to wait for more than a year, by which time it would certainly have been too late for Eva. So we went through it together early in 1907. Consequently I have no recollection of the event at all, even though it was supposed to be one of the most important events of my young life.

In order to have such a ceremony performed, the family had to select a well-educated person to act as "teacher" for the occasion. My chosen teacher was Brother Ho Wing. The ceremony is normally held early in the morning, symbolic of industrious study, with the child generally carried piggyback to the school or school room. The child's face is covered with a large piece of red silk cloth so that nothing could be seen along the way that might be construed as an unlucky omen, such as a dog or cat. Chinese customs and folklore are full of symbolism and make use of anything considered propitious, the name of which sounds similar to the idea to be conveyed. For instance, there would be various items set out on a tray at the commencement of education ceremony. These would include onions (yeung ch'ung) to denote that the child would be intelligent (chung ming), celery (k'un choi) to signify industriousness (k'un lick), and so on. Non-verbal symbolism was also employed. Some Cantonese families would make a large pancake, wrap it in red paper, and then place it on a chair for the child to sit on. This represents hope that the child will stay in his seat to study instead of

frequently running off or playing truant. Many other such symbolic practices were used to represent good learning habits.

There was, of course, a portrait of Confucius in the school room and upon entering, the child would have the covering on his head removed and be led to pay his respects to the Sage by "kowtowing." The infant would then also kowtow to his teacher, who might give him in return the ubiquitous red packet of "lucky money" and perhaps also say something meant to augur well for his education. The passages taught at these ceremonies would always be the beginning and ending of the *Three Character Classics*, which freely translated read as follows:

Man's nature is originally good. In accordance with whatever environment he comes in contact with his habits become different. If he is not properly taught, his nature will deviate (from the proper path). The important thing in the method of education is concentration.

When a child is young he learns, and when he comes to manhood he puts into practice what he has learned. Thus he can serve his superiors and his government well, and his influence will promote the welfare of the people. In this way he earns a good reputation that will reflect glory on his parents and on his ancestors who have gone ahead of him. He will set a good example for posterity and for his descendants.

Others bequeath to their children much gold and wealth, but I only have this little Classic to teach mine: 'Diligence is useful, but play is useless. Avoid the latter and persevere in your studies.'

The teacher would explain the Confucian passages in simple language and the child would be asked to repeat them several times by rote. A little calligraphy would also be taught, using a writing book in which identical rows of simple characters had already been printed in large red type. The teacher, standing behind the child, would guide his hand to help him trace, in black ink, a few columns of printed characters. The ink is usually prepared from scrapings off an "ink stick" that are ground to a fine powder. The powder is then placed in a small dish and mixed with water to the correct consistency before being transferred to a stone slab to begin the calligraphic exercise. This symbolic ceremony would then end, having been limited to these first

lessons in reading and writing.

Robbie was born in May 1906, much to the delight of our parents. They now had two sons of their own besides their nephew, Ho Wing, who had been adopted into our branch of the family. As far as I can recollect from what we were later told, Robbie was a healthy baby. One of the family photos, taken when we were all young, shows him dressed in Chinese clothing with his hair plaited into two tiny pigtails. In April 1908, almost two years after Robbie's birth, Jean arrived. As far as I know she was the first Chinese baby to be born on the Peak. Mamma often told us that when she realised she was going into labour, she immediately telephoned her doctor, who assured her there would be plenty of time for him to get there. Having had considerable experience with childbirth, Mamma told him quite firmly that the baby was "well on its way." The Peak tram did not run after 11:45 pm in those days, and the only way the doctor could reach us during the night or early morning was by sedan chair, probably using three or four bearers. Fortunately, he arrived just in time.

When Jean was a baby, Mamma had to be away again, travelling with Father. The baby was put in the care of a kind and patient elderly amah called Sui Sum (Auntie Sui). She would keep Jean's food warm by using a three-piece set of Chinese crockery whereby the food is placed on a sunken dish on top that is supported by a deep bowl of hot water, with a fitted cover over it all. The amah would extract a small portion of food and put it into a little bowl to feed Jean, while the remainder, theoretically, would be kept warm. However, Jean was such a slow eater that the amah had to refill the hot water container a couple of times before the baby finished her meal.

The family continued to grow as in January 1910 Grace was born. This was on the morning after Daisy's 11th lunar birthday, when she was fully 10 years old, an event that was regarded as her "big birthday." Consequently, Daisy was honoured with a feast that night, including a fat roasted duck as one of the main dishes. In those days, Mamma had not yet become a vegetarian, so she enjoyed that duck very much. Later she told us she had eaten so much duck that, after Grace was born early the following morning, for three days the new baby was not hungry. Mamma also told us that this time the doctor did arrive late. Fortunately she had the assistance of a Chinese midwife, Auntie Ching, and an old amah, Yee P'aw. Both were experienced in cutting and tying the umbilical cord and in giving the baby its first bath. Mamma, of course,

was also experienced in these matters, so it did not matter that the doctor arrived after all this had been accomplished. When Grace was an infant, Mamma was particularly busy nursing Father during his long illness, which greatly worried her, so she assigned the old motherly and experienced amah, Yee P'aw, exclusively to take care of the baby. Consequently, even when Grace had measles at the same time as the rest of us, she was kept apart and nursed by Yee P'aw at No 50 on the Peak while we all convalesced at No 83, where Mamma could keep an eye on us and also attend to Father's needs.

Florence, the last of the children to be born, was almost an afterthought because everyone believed that Mamma's child-bearing years were over. For a while, family life had settled down as the babies began to find their feet. In 1913 Father and Mamma went on holiday to north China, taking with them Vic and the two boys, Eddie and Robbie. I remember the day our parents set off on the trip. We all wept inconsolably, probably because we had not been separated from Mamma for a long time and I, at least, knew I would miss her very much. I was then not quite nine years old. As it happened, Father dislocated his hip joint during the trip and our amahs, ever superstitious, asserted that our weeping had brought the travellers bad luck, so I felt quite guilty. The next year we all went to Shanhaikuan for a long summer vacation, but without Father and Eddie. They had originally intended to join us as soon as Eddie, who was already at school, began his summer holidays. But World War I had broken out, so they reluctantly cancelled their trip. However, early in 1915 Father, Mamma, and Vic again went off on holiday, and while they were away one of the servants, a very fat, jolly old amah called Geen Chuk, said to us, "Hey, you people might have a little brother or a little sister when your parents come home."

We chorused, "Nonsense." But Geen Chuk persisted: "Yes, before they left, your Mamma opened the trunk in the boxroom, extracted all the baby things, and took them with them. I'm sure they'll come home with a baby sister or brother for you." We still didn't believe her, so she challenged us, "Would you little people like to bet with me?" We replied: "All right, we'll bet you 20 cents." In those days we children thought 20 cents was a lot of money, but for the amah, I suppose it was not that much, perhaps equivalent to around US\$20 today. Anyway, we made the bet with Geen Chuk, and the conversation succeeded in taking our minds off our parents' departure and giving us something to look forward to. That amah was a very good practical psychologist.

Sure enough, come August, Vic wrote to us on behalf of Mamma, saying: "You all will be interested to hear that you now have a little baby sister and we're calling her Florence, after Florence Nightingale." Mamma chose the name because she was a born nurse and a great admirer of that gallant wartime field medic. Vic, who was already 18 years old, took it upon herself to regularly visit the outpatients' department of the nearby German hospital in Tsingtao to have the baby weighed. She told me that people often saw her carrying the baby and asked if it were hers. "No," she would tell them, "it isn't my baby, it's my little sister." She had a photograph taken with Florence as a baby, and they certainly do look as though they could be mistaken for mother and child.

When they came home, Mamma knew she would be extra busy, so instead of having just one amah to look after Florence, she employed two. One was the old Yee P'aw, who had all along looked after Grace. The second amah was a younger woman whom we called Oi Jie; later, when she was older, she was known as Oi P'aw (Granny Oi). At first she was only supposed to assist the older amah, but Florence took to her much more and she really became Florence's surrogate mother. This woman was an expert storyteller and had a large repertoire of historical tales and folklore. She could neither read nor write but she recounted folklore stories quite accurately, although she may have made up some other tales of her own. Incidentally, both these women stayed on with us until the end of their days. By the time Florence arrived, Father had just been knighted. This was on June 3, 1915, King George V's birthday. Florence was born on August 6th that year, and Father exclaimed, "this is the real Siu Cheh," meaning she was like the daughter of an aristocrat. He called her "father's little daughter," his special pet.

As a result of following traditional and natural methods of having children, our parents ended up with a "round dozen"—eight daughters and four sons. The sons all had the generational classifier of Sai (or Shai), meaning roughly "generation after generation." This classifier is shared by all the sons of Father's brothers, with a second character added to denote each individual son. A character in Chinese is similar to a word or concept in Western parlance. Sometimes it may take two or more English words to convey the idea embodied in a single character, or vice-versa. Chinese names begin with the surname, which normally consists of one character (or ideograph), though there are a few dozen double-barrelled surnames that have two characters. Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China, we often see some of

the "minority" peoples or clans with three or more characters in their surnames. The surname is followed by the given name, which normally consists of two characters, either of which can be the classifier. However, there are many people who give children names with only one character. I shall translate the four names of our brothers, which may give the reader some clue to the thinking and ideals of our parents. In order of seniority, our siblings were: Sai Wing (Glorious), Victoria Jubilee (we usually called her Vic), Sai Kan (Industrious), Henry, Daisy, Mary, Sai Kim (Economical), Edward (Eddie), Eva, Irene, Shai Lai (Courteous), Robert (Robbie), Jean, Grace, and Florence. Cantonese pronunciations were used for the sons' names, with the daughters and female cousins all having separate generational classifiers, family by family. As there were as many as eight girls in our family, I shall not bore the reader with listing and translating Chinese names for all of them.

Family relationships extended beyond those of our immediate household, as would be expected, since we were brought up in the Chinese tradition. Some of our relatives entered our lives when we were still quite young, but family ties were so strong that even distant relatives cropped up from time to time during the course of our lives, helping to maintain the extended family group. Father originally came from a large family, but we only got to know about half his siblings. Those we knew best were two of his younger brothers, Third Uncle and Fifth Uncle (Ho Fook and Ho Kom-tong), and one of his younger sisters, Seventh Auntie (Mrs Wong Kom-fook). We also knew our Sixth Uncle (Walter), but only slightly. Grace and I initially met him and his first wife, Auntie Louise (a Caucasian from South Africa), when they visited us in Switzerland. They returned to Hong Kong just in time to attend Mamma's funeral in January 1938. When I was only a child, I remember our Eighth Aunt coming from Singapore to visit Father, who had been bedridden for several years. Later, when I travelled with Father on his golden honeymoon in 1932, he and I searched for and found her grave in a Singapore cemetery. Fourth Uncle had been adopted by a family called Pao who took him to live in Japan. The Paos had a daughter who gave them a grandson and several granddaughters. Eventually the girls came home to live in Macau, but later they moved to Hong Kong where they worked for the Buddhist schools that Mamma had established. We never heard that Father had a ninth younger brother until Uncle Walter



returned to Hong Kong in 1938. It was while chatting with his younger sister, Seventh Aunt, that the Ninth Brother, who had died in infancy, was mentioned. My Seventh Aunt's daughter, Rosie (Mrs J.M. Tan), told us about the conversation later on, but that was all we ever heard of Father's little brother.

Mamma was the eldest of four children but two of them, a younger sister and the elder of two boys, died suddenly as a result of an epidemic disease soon after they went to live in Shanghai. Brother Gai, some eight years Mamma's junior, was thus quite spoilt when he was young. I remember him well, as we used to call at his home in later years to pay our respects on festive days and at Chinese New Year. He married Uncle and Auntie Ho Fook's eldest daughter and second child Bessie, who was thus "promoted" to become our aunt although by birth she was our first cousin. They had four children, two girls and then two boys, who were the closest cousins we had. We were close to each other because they were the same age as Eva, myself, and Robbie, and because the two boys came to live in our home after their mother's death. There were various other relatives of one kind or another.

In the old days, Chinese people put great emphasis on human relationships, especially those connected with family. The whole social structure was built mainly around these relationships, and it held society together by establishing a binding force in the same way as do modern associations, fraternities, or other such organisations. A child learned from an early age to call people according to how they were related to him or his family. Following Chinese etiquette, we were taught to call our relatives in accordance with their positions within the family. As we grew older and understood what the names of the various relationships meant, we would immediately know how that particular person was related to us or to our parents.

This method of recognising a family's hierarchy extended throughout the web of relatives. Therefore there were different names given to, say, various types of cousins. If they were the children of two brothers, or of male cousins with the same surname (even including second, third, and more distant cousins, so long as they were descendants of the same family and of the same generation), they would be called brothers or sisters instead of cousins. However, they would sometimes add another word—Chin, Tang, or Jung—to differentiate between "real" siblings and first or second cousins. The children of a brother and sister would call each other Cousin Elder (or Younger)

Sister or Brother. But in speaking of the relationship, we would say they were Goo Biao, literally meaning Paternal Aunt Cousins. The children of two sisters would also call each other cousin, but they would be spoken of as Maternal Sister Cousins, or Yi Biao. If the other person was one or more generations senior to us, we would call them, say, Third Cousin Uncle or Third Cousin Aunt, so that people would immediately know how they were related to our families.

As a result of these names, I learned and understood how each relative fit into the structure of my own close-knit family. This facility helped provide us with a common bond even when we met for the first time in later life. For example, the outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese War brought many Cheng relatives to Hong Kong, and H.H.'s (H.H. Cheng, my late husband) sister Mary took me along to meet some of them. At their many family gatherings, Mary would call them by their family titles, and in most cases I could immediately understand their relationships. However, there were a few that puzzled me and others that particularly interested me. All who were direct descendants of the famous Imperial Commissioner Lin Jexu (formerly Lin Tse-hsu) were very proud of the fact, and I asked the two Cousin Uncles for more details. Each of them made out a simple family chart to show me how the famous Lin and his wife had three sons and three daughters (the latter married into the Liu, Shen, and Cheng families). Many of them further intermarried, so that H.H. belonged to the fifth generation through his maternal grandparents, both of whom were "external grandchildren" of the old couple, because the daughter of the eldest Lin sister had married the son of the third one. All this aroused my interest as I had always been keen on family trees, perhaps first through studying English history at the Diocesan Girls' School, where the custom was to learn the genealogy charts of Britain's royal families. When I went to Beijing as a new widow and H.H.'s brother Dick found I was interested in the subject, he produced a copy of the Cheng genealogy brought to him from the old family home in Fuzhou.

I generally regard the meaning of Chin-jia to be that of related families. Actually, there is no corresponding expression in the English language, although I have often suggested that perhaps there should be—even though it might not mean that people related in that way will necessarily get along any better. To explain a little of how the system works, when the son or daughter of one family marries the son or daughter from another, the two families become Chin-jia. Therefore

when I married into the Cheng family, the Ho and Cheng families became Chin-jias. A quarter of a century later, when my daughter married into the Dandliker family, my son-in-law's mother was still alive, and I explained to her that she was my Chin-jia. I often went to see her and we got on really well with each other, so much so that she treated me like a sister and we regularly went out together. If we had lunch, though, we decided that each would pay her own way so that we could order whatever we felt like without having to consider the cost to the other. The Chinese extend this further to say that the Chin-jias of the Chin-jias are also distantly related to each other. They also have what they call the four family relationship, which I believe refers to the families of both parents of a young couple. For instance, when I married H.H. the Ho and Chang families of my parents, when added to the Cheng and Wang families of his parents, would make up the four families who were thus brought together through a marital relationship.

There is even a further extension of this idea to relationships through marriage. For instance, the eldest daughter of the Cheng family was married to a well-known Liang family member who also happened to be a good friend of my parents. In such situations, it is not always necessary to treat the other family as a related family, but sometimes they did so and it became accepted behaviour. For related families there were many social obligations expected, both as a matter of courtesy and as accepted custom. For Chinese New Year and other notable festivals, for instance, they had to send greetings to each other. If there was a funeral, they would be expected to extend condolences or attend as a mourner. If it were a birthday or wedding, they would send congratulatory messages or gifts.

I personally was the recipient of this sort of consideration when I went to Tangshan to work as an English secretary in the Kailan coal mines, later the scene of a disastrous earthquake in 1976. In that coal mine worked the Ma family, the head of which was in charge of stores. His wife had been a Miss Kuan; her sister-in-law, Miss Liang; and her elder sister-in-law the sister of my husband, H.H. Cheng. Mr and Mrs Ma of Tangshan were extremely sympathetic towards my fatherless daughter and towards me as a widow. Mrs Ma felt that we would probably be lonely on special occasions, so at Chinese New Year and other festivals she would always invite Junie, our amah, and myself to have dinner with her family. She also taught her children to call me Third Aunt because that is what the Liang family children called me.

Some of the Ma's colleagues would ask me, "How are you related to them?" and I would reply: "I'm the third sister-in-law of the second sister-in-law of Mrs Ma's second sister-in-law." The Chinese always included the rank when referring to their relatives. In other words, my husband's eldest sister married the second son of the Liang family. The eldest daughter of the Liang family married the second son of the Kwan family, then this fifth daughter of the Kuan family married Mr Ma.

These relationships may sound complicated, but they reflect typical Chinese politeness. They also teach children about kindness and humanitarianism. When I visit Beijing and see those Ma children, they still call me Third Maternal Aunt as they had been instructed to do by their mother. Of course, they are now all grown up. One is the dean of studies at a secondary school, another lectures at a university, and yet another teaches music in Yunnan province. The second son of the Liang family—my sister-in-law's husband, Mr T. Kai Liang—was also extremely kind to me and my daughter, and we lived in his parents' home whenever we were in Beijing.

This system for identifying family relationships, which places importance on respect and consideration of the individual, was often sustained through family anecdotes. Sometimes these were about the relatives we knew well, but at other times, although we knew the family relationship of the person about whom the story was told, we had never actually met them. A few examples might illustrate some of my own family's oral traditions.

My father was one of nine children, three daughters and six sons, including the youngest son who died in infancy. Father was the second child and eldest son of the family, so he had to shoulder many responsibilities to help his mother, to whom he was of course loyal and dutiful. We were told that she used to visit him every Sunday morning and, as she was fond of roast chicken, he always had one prepared for her as a treat. Even after she was long dead and buried, Father still had a roast chicken offered to her at the family shrine every Sunday. After Father, Grandmother bore four more sons in fairly rapid succession: our Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Paternal Uncles, as we called them in Chinese. We saw the Third and Fifth Uncles most and always called them by those titles.

Third Uncle was a highly public-spirited person. He endowed the Ho Fook Scholarships at a number of government schools, including his own alma mater, Queen's College, and at the arts and medical

faculties of The University of Hong Kong. He also served on the Hong Kong Legislative Council for a number of years. Of all my uncles, I admired Third Uncle most, although when we were children we lived in awe of him. I remember he used to come up to the Peak on Sunday mornings to visit Mamma, who relied on him for advice and moral support when Father was so ill that he could not see anyone, not even his own brother for a couple of years.

On one of those occasions Eva and I were sitting on stools on the little bridge just outside the main entrance to Father's house at No 83, the Peak, when Third Uncle arrived. The amah had tied up our hair with some new white, inch-wide ribbons, and we thought they were rather pretty. Although Third Uncle seemed westernised in many ways, and perhaps because I had never seen him dressed in Chinese clothes, he surprised us when he exclaimed: "Why do you wear white hair ribbons? Go and have them changed for red ones." We obediently did so. The adults may have been extra-worried about Father's long illness at that time, hence his instructions to have the ribbons changed. Of course, for Chinese people white is used for mourning while red is the happy colour, so his instructions expressed his deep concern about his brother's health.

There is an interesting story that Mamma used to recount about our Fourth Paternal Uncle. Grandmother was travelling, possibly from Shanghai back to Hong Kong, after having visited someone in the Yangtse area with her many sons. Another female passenger admired her good fortune to have so many sons and managed to persuade Grandmother to "give" her one of them. Arrangements were made for Fourth Uncle to be adopted by this lady and her husband, a Mr Pao, who was in business in Japan. Fourth Uncle eventually married a quiet, refined lady whose feet had been bound but later released, just like Lady Margaret's and Mamma's had been. Fourth Uncle and his wife had a daughter who in turn gave birth, as Mrs Poon, to several daughters and a son. Young Mr Poon came to our house and worked as Mamma's Chinese secretary for a number of years. After Fourth Uncle died in Japan, his widow and family returned to Hong Kong and stayed in Macau. Fourth Aunt brought with her the daughter of her younger brother, Miss Lam Ling-chun, who became Mamma's successor in her Buddhist activities and responsibilities. Several of the Poon girls helped Mamma run her charity educational establishments, the Po Kok Primary Schools in Macau and Hong Kong. The second eldest girl, Miss W.M. Poon, became

headmistress of the First Free Girls' Primary School in Hong Kong. When she eventually retired, she was invited to become head of the seminary, which was also registered by the Education Department as a school. Miss Poon was also asked to serve on the board of trustees of both the Tung Lin Kok Yuen Temple and the Po Kok schools.

Fifth Uncle was very much an extrovert. He too entered the business world, but he had many other side interests. He was especially well known for his romantic life, his appreciation of Chinese art and drama, his knowledge of and practice in Chinese herbal medicines, and his expert and practical knowledge of horticulture. Above all he was notorious for maintaining 12 concubines—the last one a well-known Chinese opera singer and actress—by whom he fathered more than 30 children. The first two concubines, called by the servants Second Mistress and Third Mistress respectively, had been taken into his household with the full knowledge and approval of Fifth Aunt. The two mistresses had been through the Yap Kung ceremony and had "served tea" to the first wife, so they were allowed into the main mansion whenever there was any festival or special function. The Fourth Mistress had been brought up by Fifth Aunt herself, so she too had the same approval and status as numbers two and three. After that, Fifth Aunt must have refused to approve any more, so Fifth Uncle had a small house established for all the concubines and put Second Mistress in charge of that household. Fourth Mistress stayed on with Fifth Aunt.

Fifth Uncle was also an expert geomancer, that is, he understood how to interpret the meanings of "fung shui," popularly and literally translated into "wind and water." According to those versed in this Oriental specialty, the geomancer could predict whether a house or gravesite would become auspicious or otherwise. Much depended upon the exact direction the object faced. Geomancers use a special Chinese compass and also study the distant view of the site to determine their predictions. For instance, the background scenery beyond a gravesite could be interpreted as appearing like a dragon on the left and a tiger on the right. In other words, with some mountains on both sides and those on the left rising higher than those on the right, that site would be a propitious one. In fact, Fifth Uncle claimed it was because he had helped Father select Mamma's gravesite, many decades before she died, that it was so good and, consequently, that Robbie was able to rise so high in his military career. Chinese geomancy is such a complicated art (or science) that I would not attempt to describe it more fully here, but

there are many authoritative works on the subject written in both Chinese and English for those interested in learning more about it.

Anyway, Fifth Uncle had many friends who were also well versed in fung shui. When he was still quite young, Fifth Uncle bought a large piece of government land adjoining the Chiu Yuen Cemetery, near Mamma's gravesite but lower down the hill. He then proceeded to carefully develop it, giving the name of Ho Chong, meaning Farmstead of the Ho Family, to his section of the cemetery. He even installed an iron gate at the entrance bearing his name. I vividly remember Fifth Uncle telling us that when he died, all his family would have to do would be to put his coffin in the grave and add the date and hour of his death according to the traditional Chinese system of Heavenly and Earthly Stems, which gives a special name to each two-hourly time period. He had already prepared the tombstone with the name, date of birth, and all the necessary information except the date and hour of death engraved on it. He had removable wooden covers made for each tombstone while the future occupant of the grave was still alive.

For Chinese graves there is much preparation to be done. The vault has to be carefully excavated, with workmen digging it deep, then the site is lined on the bottom and sides with several layers of lime and closely pounded earth to keep the chamber as dry as possible. Incidentally, this method of burial chamber preparation may partially explain the extremely well-preserved archaeological finds emanating from China in recent years.

Fifth Uncle first prepared two graves, one for himself and one for Fifth Aunt, on the highest level of his land, some 20 feet below Mamma's grave. On a lower level, he planned other chambers for some of the concubines, and on a third level there was a large space available for some of the sons and daughters-in-law. Presumably the daughters would be married and their burial would then become the responsibility of their husbands' families. Beyond the gravesites was a little house or pavilion where members of the family could rest whenever they visited his "farmstead." There were two bedrooms, one on each side, and a living room in the centre of the house. While he was still alive, Fifth Uncle would sometimes go to his little villa "to get away from it all." On the western side of his land, away from the roadway, he laid out a vegetable garden that provided some of his households with fresh produce. In a way, Fifth Uncle knew how to enjoy life.

Another relative, Sixth Uncle Walter, recounted at our first

meeting with him in Switzerland how Grandmother would sometimes give the children money to attend a Chinese opera show, and when they came home she would encourage them to tell her all about it. Even then, said Uncle Walter, as a young boy Fifth Uncle could act out something of what he had seen to please his mother. Fifth Uncle eventually became quite a well-known and popular amateur actor. He was short in stature and thus could sometimes impersonate a female character. Just at the outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese War, a group of patriotic Chinese opera singers organised a philanthropic company of performers to help raise funds for China. Fifth Uncle took part in some of the shows, thus ensuring good donations on those particular nights. This happened just before Mamma passed away. When Fifth Uncle heard that Mamma was critically ill, he came up to visit her. I clearly remember that we did not allow most visitors to see Mamma so that she could rest more peacefully, but we made an exception for Fifth Uncle. Although very ill, Mamma still apologised for not having been able to see and hear Fifth Uncle at the charity show. He immediately offered to sing his special song, an extract from the famous opera about the White Snake Fairy, then and there for her. We were all quite touched by the gesture.

Fifth Uncle was a connoisseur of Chinese curios and other art objects, and I well remember in my mind's eye the two blackwood and glass cabinets in his upstairs sitting-room that contained a number of choice pieces. On one occasion when we visited him on a festival day, Fifth Uncle was in an especially happy mood and took time to tell us something about those curios. He was proud to own them, and I believe that after he died they were all distributed among his extremely large family. Another anecdote concerning Fifth Uncle was that during a special dinner party he had arranged, the guest of honour happened to praise a well-cooked and exquisitely presented dish. Fifth Uncle immediately sent for his chef and, in the presence of his guest, gave the cook an on-the-spot cash award for having produced such good food.

Possessing a veritable "green thumb," Fifth Uncle was so knowledgeable about gardening and plant growing that he was invariably invited to judge at the Hong Kong Horticultural, Flower, and Vegetable shows, either at the grounds near Government House or at the shows for rural products held in the New Territories. He would go around with the other judges, who respected his comments and opinions on which exhibits deserved the first or second prizes, the challenge cups, and other awards. For judging purposes, all the plants were identified



only by numbers, but after the final decisions were made, coloured name-card certificates, held by split bamboo slivers, were stuck into the winning pots of flowers or laid down beside the vegetables or cut flowers. We children were always interested in looking around to see if any of the prizes had been won under the name of Sir Robert Ho Tung for the Peak gardens, or Lady Ho Tung for those from Idlewild.

Our Sixth Uncle Walter won a scholarship to study in England as soon as he finished his early tuition at Central School (later renamed Queen's College) in Hong Kong. That was long before we were born, so we never saw him until the 1930s. His was the first and only such scholarship ever offered to a student of that school, and we had all been told how clever he was. After Uncle Walter graduated in the UK, he had intended to return to Hong Kong to see his mother, but she died around that time in 1896, so he went to South Africa where he married and was employed as a mining engineer for most of his working life. Before he took trips to Europe from Africa he would write Father to see if he, too, might be going so that they could arrange to meet somewhere. On one particular trip, in the early 1930s, Father told Uncle Walter that Grace and I were already in Europe, so he came to see us in Switzerland. We were greatly impressed, at this first meeting with Sixth Uncle, that he could still speak a good deal of Chinese. However, I had the scare of my life during his visit to see him suffer one of his asthma attacks. Fortunately his wife, Auntie Louise, and his secretary, who later became his second wife after Auntie Louise died, were with him. They knew how to help him and also assured us that the attack would quickly subside, as it did. We were told that Uncle Walter's mother had been reluctant to let him go so far away to further his studies, but Father had pleaded for him so that Uncle could stay on in England until he graduated. When he and Aunt Louise eventually arrived back in Hong Kong in a caravan, it was just in time to attend Mamma's funeral, which had been postponed for a few days to allow for Eddie's arrival from Shanghai in early January 1938. Sixth Uncle Walter had an excellent memory and fascinated us with stories about his early childhood. He and his wife remained in Hong Kong for several months during which time his former schoolmates and friends, who were all happy to see him again, arranged a splendid Chinese dinner party in his honour.

I have always thought of our Seventh and Eighth Paternal Aunts as the "babies" of the family, but evidently there was a ninth boy as well. Seventh Aunt (Mrs Wong Kum-fook) was the one who took her

daughter, her three sons, and her husband's fourth son by his concubine to England for their studies. They were stranded there by the advent of World War I, and she became "Auntie" to many other Chinese students studying in and around London. Later, when she returned to Hong Kong, she said she was very proud of them all and their achievements as scholars. When my Eighth Paternal Aunt was a baby, her servant had let her fall and she became crippled for life. Lady Margaret had at first advised her not to marry, but she fell in love and she and her husband went off to Singapore, much to Lady Margaret's chagrin. Mamma said she felt sorry for Eighth Paternal Aunt because she seemed to become cut off from the family. When we were children, Eighth Paternal Aunt heard that Father was very ill, and she came all the way from Singapore to visit him because he had been such a good brother to her. I remember she brought along a lovely Chinese basket, woven with strips of rattan peel and carefully padded inside, which kept the tea warm for hours. She later died in Singapore. When Father went to England for his Golden Honeymoon with Lady Margaret in 1932, he had already made enquiries concerning her grave, and I went with him to visit it. I believe she had a son and a daughter, but we never saw them.

Mamma was the eldest of four children, first two girls and then two boys. After the family went to Shanghai the two middle children succumbed to a sudden infection and died. Grandma felt it was her duty to report the tragedy to her mother-in-law, who then had someone write back a very unkind letter. Grandma, in her grief, actually attempted suicide, but Mamma, who maintained a careful watch over her mother, was able to prevent an added tragedy. Consequently, Grandma gave in to every whim of the youngest child, my Maternal Uncle Gai (Cheung Pui-gai, alias Cheung Wai-nam), and he became thoroughly spoilt. Maternal Uncle, as we used to call him, later married Bessie, the second child and eldest daughter of Third Uncle and Auntie Ho Fook. Bessie was thus "promoted in rank" to become our Maternal Aunt-by-Marriage, although she was also in fact our first cousin. They had two girls and two boys, who are closely related to us. When their mother died following an operation for an ectopic pregnancy, the two girls, Maggie and Lily, went to stay with their maternal grandparents, Third Uncle and Aunt Ho Fook. The two boys, Hong and Ling, came to stay with us at the Peak for several years. Later, Mamma sent them back to their father, who had gone to live in north China. The younger one, Ling, later came back to study in Hong Kong.

## Family

Perhaps those not associated with our family, and particularly non-Chinese, may find these stories somewhat trivial and the relationships confusing. However for me and my siblings, they represent an important network of information about the people who comprised, and still comprise, the extended clan of which we are a part. From this perspective, the identification of family relationships together with the stories associated with them are important to the future existence of our line. To deny them by omission would in some way diminish the foundation for life given to us by our ancestors.

## T W O

# Home

**D**uring the first few years of my life, we all lived in Father's town house, which was popularly called "The Red House" in Chinese because it was painted in that colour. For the convenience of delivery men and others, there was a little wooden tablet hanging at the side entrance to show that the Ho family lived there. However, above the front entrance were large Chinese characters moulded into the concrete which proclaimed it as the Ho Chang Yuen Tang, meaning the "Long-flourishing Ho Tang." This was the only place where our Chinese Tang name could be seen. Idlewild, the name by which the building was popularly known, had been built by a former director of public works and was situated on Seymour Road in the Mid-Levels. This was a select residential area built on the hillside directly above Hong Kong Island's traditional commercial centre on the waterfront facing Victoria Harbour. Although it was a massive house with huge rooms, Idlewild was still hardly large enough for such an extended family as ours. Some idea of the size of the hillside complex can be gained from the fact that when it was demolished many years later it was replaced by more than 100 apartments in several multi-storey buildings.

Idlewild would be considered rather grand by today's terms. The main entrance was approached first by driving up two fairly long sloping driveways, then climbing a wide, stone stairway of about ten steps, framed at the bottom on either side by two lanterns on pedestals and closed off by a pair of wrought iron gates. Inside was a landing, the floor of which was inlaid with small coloured tiles in a geometric pattern, which brought the visitor to the heavy teakwood doors that led

into the building. They were fitted with beautifully crafted stained glass windows, one depicting a Scottish scene, the other Italian. The doors led on to wide verandas that stretched along the western and northern sides of the house. Originally these were open to the elements, but in later years those on the north side were enclosed by glass sections that could be opened outwards. The grandson who eventually sold the house kept these stained glass windows and other special objects as souvenirs.

It was possible to proceed straight from the main entrance into the sitting room, through the dining room, and then up a few steps to the "formal" garden. Sometimes this garden would be covered for use as a theatre, with an itinerant troupe performing Chinese opera for the guests. It provided the setting for the wedding receptions of Robbie and Jean, for Father's "grand birthday" and golden wedding celebrations, and, on a sadder note, also for both Father's and Eddie's funerals. For Vic's wedding, we used only the dining room for the ceremony and the other two English and Chinese sitting rooms for the guests. The two sets of doors at the entrance to the mansion would be thrown open on special occasions to make it easier for guests entering or leaving the house to do so in an orderly, sedate fashion.

I must reluctantly add that soon after World War II began, both sets of doors were thrown open for a distasteful occasion that occurred early in the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong. I heard about it from my husband some time after it occurred, although because of the war Lady Margaret and many of us were then living in the basement of the same house. She had a small bed, but we slept on mattresses on the basement floor. The Japanese army officers who had occupied the upper floors of Idlewild held a memorial service for their "glorious war dead" in Hong Kong soon after the fighting ended in 1941. One or two trucks containing their deceased personnel were driven to our front entrance, where the body of their highest-ranking officer was brought in first to "lie in state," near where Father and Eddie were to lie when they passed away. A funeral service was held for all these "fallen Japanese heroes" before they were dispatched to the crematorium. Thereafter their ashes were sent back to Japan.

Normally, visitors using the main entrance to the house passed along the carpeted main corridor, which was lined with Chinese scrolls, blackwood furniture, and ornamental pieces presented by friends from time to time. Guests would then enter the sitting and dining rooms from doors opposite the main staircase in the middle of the corridor. These

two rooms were separated by a pair of sliding doors that could be hidden away into wall recesses, thus forming a long reception room suitable for heavily attended occasions. There was also a reception room on the opposite side of the corridor, which was connected by a door leading to the inner courtyard of the house. This room was furnished with traditional Chinese blackwood furniture, each piece upholstered in hand-embroidered red satin cloth. The wood was inlaid with mother-of-pearl and had large white marble slabs as the seats and backs of each chair and on top of the table. Each slab depicted a scene of clouds, waves, or mountain views. We called this the Marble Sitting Room.

Among the more formal articles of furniture in the reception room was a large "opium divan" (k'ang) that was larger than a modern, king-size bed. It was fenced in on three sides by wooden panels roughly 18 inches high, leaving one long side open. When used for its original purpose, it could accommodate two persons lying down on either side of the low central table on firm mattresses two inches thick. There was also a long, hard pillow for each individual, and they shared a central, low table upon which stood a tray holding all the necessary equipment for opium smoking. At Idlewild, the smoking accoutrements had been packed away, but the pillows and the table remained and were put to practical use as a tea-table for anyone sitting on the edge of the k'ang.

When we were teenagers, I actually came in direct contact with the opium smoking habit. Our parents had invited a Chinese theatrical couple to come to one of our Peak houses to teach us how to perform and sing Chinese opera. Both of these singers needed to have a few "smokes" before they could muster the energy and resolve to tackle our lessons in that difficult but special Chinese art form. We loved to watch them prepare their pipes and, I must confess, I really liked the smell of burnt opium. Of course I never saw the k'ang at Idlewild used for that purpose; it was just part of the Marble Room setting. When a k'ang was used for its original purpose, the two smokers would recline sideways, curled up with their legs tucked in, on either side of the central table. On the tray would be the opium lamp, a small jar of raw opium gum, a pair of implements shaped like a crochet-hook but with a fine point instead of a hook, and, of course, two long pipes. The hook was used to take up a little blob of the gooey substance that the smoker would then burn while constantly turning it until it gradually expanded and reached the proper consistency. He would then quickly stick it inside the hole in the pipe bowl and inhale deeply from the other end.

Above the opium divan in the Marble Room hung an enlarged portrait of our paternal grandmother, whose maiden name was Shi. Although from this position she presided over the room, she seemed a kindly, motherly type of woman. None of us children ever met her because she died in 1896. On both sides of the portrait hung a pair of Chinese couplets executed in stylish Chinese calligraphy. The couplets praised the old lady's virtues of goodness and kindness, attributes that would reap fine reward for her descendants. This is a typical Chinese custom, eulogising those who have passed on by placing such writings on the flanks of the ancestors' portraits. Ordinarily during the winter the furniture in the Marble Room had less elaborate covers than those described for use on festive occasions. However, in summer the furniture was often left uncovered because the marble slabs were cool to sit on. In the years right up to World War II we frequently had family gatherings, and our closest relatives would congregate around two or three tables in this special room, generally for an evening meal. On the first and second days of Lunar New Year the room was frequently used for meals, both for family and for New Year well-wishers. I am glad that I took a photograph of this room with the k'ang, our grandmother's portrait, and the couplets.

In the other sitting room, which was furnished in western style, there was a glass cabinet containing some 20-odd rhinoceros horn goblets that Father had acquired on one of his frequent trips to Beijing. The goblets were said to have come from the Imperial Palace, but someone had "arranged" their sale. It was claimed that the goblets could detect whether the wine served in them had been poisoned. If so, the goblets would reportedly change colour. Nobody ever put them to the test, and the cabinets were always kept firmly locked. Also in the sitting room, on either side of the entranceway beside the sliding doors, were two large *cloisonne objets d'art* about three feet high and inset with pieces of jade and other precious materials also from Beijing. One was a large gourd and the other an elephant on a stand. At the entrance to the dining room there was an exquisitely carved blackwood screen with red silk panels embroidered one hundred times with the Chinese character for longevity. The screen had been a present to Father for one of his "grand birthday" celebrations. These events are held every decade, starting from a person's 60th year.

At this point I must mention the little family place of worship off the end

of the corridor on the ground floor. Inside the room there were two shrines opposite each other: one dedicated to the deities in Heaven and the traditional deities of the Chinese people, the other carrying the spiritual tablets or photographs of various ancestors. This shrine served not only our own immediate family but occasionally other branches of the clan as well. This was the place they would come to pay their respects on Lunar New Year's Day, when they were first married, when a child was a full month old, and so forth. For anniversaries of the birth or death of an ancestor, the descendants were expected to visit Idlewild to pay their respects, but as we were such a large clan not everybody did that. On these occasions, food would be prepared in large quantities, with choice dishes first being laid out on the altar as offerings to the ancestors. The descendants were then called upon to pay their respects, after which there might be a set of paper clothing and symbolic paper money burnt as offerings. The family would then sit down to have their meal. Following World War II we discontinued this practice, but I can vividly recall many of those occasions prior to 1941.

In the middle of the corridor connecting the various reception rooms was a wide staircase leading to the upper floors. Out back there was a pantry, and at the centre of the building an inner courtyard. This courtyard boasted a good, deep well that seemed to have a perennial supply of water. It was especially useful at the outbreak of the Pacific War, because when the Japanese invaded and captured Hong Kong, they simply turned off the water supply to the whole island. Thus there was a constant queue of neighbours patiently waiting their turn to draw water from our well. On the southeast corner of the courtyard on a slightly higher level there was a large Chinese kitchen, two larger rooms to the east for senior male staff, and another set of smaller rooms on the south side for other men servants. Farther to the east there was a broad walk and then a flight of steps leading down to the side entrance on Seymour Road, which the delivery men and servants used. On the west side there was a flight of narrow steps leading up to a servants' dining room that was used by both sexes.

The main staircase in the house led straight up to Father's and Mamma's suites of rooms, each of which had a dressing room and bathroom at the back and a wide, open veranda at the front. When we were young, the children would occasionally stay in Mamma's room or in the "middle room" nearby. However in 1928, when Robbie married Hesta, there seemed to be no other space available, so he and his bride



were given Mamma's room. The rest of us resided in the middle room whenever we stayed at Idlewild. Father remained in his own suite whenever he was in town, right from the time he bought the house just before the turn of the century until he died there in April 1956.

There were several additional rooms on the same floor, some of which were connected by a narrow veranda overlooking the inner courtyard below. One of these was a "breakfast room" where we normally had all our meals. Some of the other little rooms were occupied at different times by various people who came to stay at the house. The breakfast room was directly connected to the ground floor by a steep flight of stairs. Lady Margaret used this general purpose room from time to time when she informally entertained a visiting relative or friend, or invited some of her staff to join her in a game of mah-jong. Occasionally she would teach some of us children to play the game, though as an adult I always declined to join in because I felt it was such a waste of time.

Also on the same floor connected by a corridor running along the rear of the house were a number of rooms used by various female staff. The first room was reserved for Miss Au Choi, whom we called Choi Cheh (Elder Sister Choi) and who was Lady Margaret's most trusted and faithful servant. She began life as a mui tsai, received some schooling from our tutor, Miss Yin, and was very good at figures. She eventually became Lady Margaret's treasurer and housekeeper. Choi Cheh died shortly after Lady Margaret, and Mary had her buried in the Colonial Cemetery near the foot of Lady Margaret's grave. One of the other rooms was used as a bedroom and workroom for an amah we called Luk Goo (Sixth Aunt), who was an extremely capable embroiderer and needleworker.

Because she could use a sewing machine and was also an accomplished Chinese seamstress and hand embroiderer, Luk Goo made many of Lady Margaret's Chinese clothes. She also made dozens of items for the children, who loved to dress up in traditional garb for celebrations such as the Seven Sisters' Festival, held on the seventh day of the seventh month. Luk Goo was highly skilled and would turn her talents to our advantage at special times, such as when she made some fine articles for Vic's dowry. As late as 1941, when my daughter June was born, this wonderful old amah made her a little embroidered red satin jacket and a red embroidered square with wide straps on each corner for carrying the baby piggyback. These were Mother's special

presents for the baby when she was a month old. After Father's death Luk Goo, like ourselves, was allowed to stay on at Idlewild for another five years. However, Luk Goo, a devout Buddhist, often seemed quite worried about where she would live thereafter. When I heard of a good, well-run Buddhist home for the aged, I gladly recommended her to the nuns who accepted her there to spend the last years of her life. She was well cared for by these dedicated younger women and, when she passed away, the other residents held religious services for her. Later, another old family amah, Oi P'aw, who used to look after Florence and Daisy, knowing the fine treatment that Luk Goo had received from the nuns, also decided to spend her remaining days at the Buddhist home.

At the end of the back row of rooms there was a large room that was used twice daily by the staff at Idlewild as their refectory. It was also employed just before Lunar New Year to prepare the traditional chin dui (pastry balls). These are Chinese goodies made with a plain flour dough, filled with a variety of ingredients, rolled in sesame seeds, and then deep fried. This large room had three outlets: one opened near the top of the back steps coming up from the courtyard; the second opened on to a long covered corridor like a bridge that linked this part of the house to the front side, near the entrance to Father's room and the main staircase; and the third led to the "English kitchen" at the back.

Although we lived in typical Chinese fashion, there was a western-style kitchen upstairs. Here Father's western food cook, Kwan Sing, reigned supreme. For Christmas parties, Kwan Sing could turn out a feast for two dozen of us, complete with oxtail soup, roast turkey, mixed vegetables, and rich gravy. For dessert, he would make a delicious plum pudding into which he inserted various silver trinkets plus a real gold half-sovereign for some lucky diner to find. The pudding was served piping hot, *flambé* with brandy and an appropriate sauce. Apart from the lucky finder of the gold coin, most of us would discover at least one trinket in our portion of pudding, so everyone could enjoy the fun.

Idlewild was a big rambling house, and had to be to accommodate our large family together with all the attendant servants. On yet another floor of the building, Lady Margaret had her bedroom and dressing room. These were both quite spacious, as was her bathroom. Outside Lady Margaret had a partly covered sitting area that she and her staff used for various purposes. In later years, when Eva came home to stay at Idlewild, an extra bedroom and bathroom were built for her on the same level as Lady Margaret's suite, and she was

provided with a separate staircase leading from her quarters to near the top of the main staircase. As she was a highly successful, well-known gynaecologist and obstetric surgeon, this private staircase helped her to get in and out of her quarters at any hour of the day or night without disturbing the rest of the household.

As Idlewild had been built on a steep hillside it had, of necessity, gardens on several levels. Where it was not possible to have a proper garden, there were many potted plants instead. These were planned by our head gardener and set out by the under-gardeners, of whom we had several. At the basement level there were other potted plants atop brick pedestals at regular intervals along the banister so that they could be seen from Seymour Road below. Where space allowed, there were also small patches of garden, generally bordered with flowers, near the front entrance. A few small trees, arranged here and there, boasted fragrant little flowers that we always looked out for. Some, called hum siu (smiling demurely), were the size of half a little fingernail. Others, such as the cassia (yu fa), were just as tiny but grew in small bunches and were said to have medicinal qualities. On the balconies outside and inside the enclosed verandas on the floor with the reception rooms, there were many more potted plants that would be changed when necessary by the gardeners. Inside the reception rooms, there would be pots of maidenhair or other ferns placed inside large silver or porcelain bowls.

A short iron and cement bridge plus a set of steps led from the living or sitting rooms on the ground floor to the fairly large formal garden, which was laid out with numerous flower beds divided by lawns and with cement pathways around the side and down the centre. Each flower bed was edged with Po Ch'o, a border grass, and planted with annual or perennial blooms in season. Our gardener was very proud of his flowers, which included bright red or orange nasturtiums, sometimes double-petalled, brightly coloured verbena (to which the Chinese gave the fanciful name of "brocade covering the ground"), sweet smelling stocks, hollyhocks, sweet peas, yellow or orange marigolds, white daisies or marguerites, and many others.

At the eastern end of the gardens was a wrought-iron framework strung so that the family laundry could be hung out to dry. One bright sunny day, when the amahs were hanging out our clothes, Master Chiu, our teacher, admonished: "Don't put out the laundry as it will soon rain." The amahs, who didn't believe him, responded: "Old

Master, surely it won't rain. Just look at the beautiful sunshine." Sure enough, though, the downpour came and the washing had to be taken down in a hurry. We were astonished by the accuracy of the Old Master's prediction and asked him how he had accomplished it. Master Chiu explained that he could clearly see rain clouds in the distance and also the wind had been heading towards us. I think it was his way of teaching us to use our powers of observation and deduction, but he had made a careful study of weather conditions and other connected specialities.

One of the paths from the garden led to another little bridge over the backyard of the building below, which connected the flat roof of an annex to the main house. The roof of this building was empty except for folding garden chairs and a folding square table. On fine winter days, I frequently went out there for a little sunshine, and at times I would have guests join me. Father also liked to sun himself on the roof and would bring along a few personal attendants. This sitting-out area commanded an excellent view, both of busy Victoria Harbour on the north side and of the Peak summit that stood high above our tiered gardens.

When I was a child, the upstairs apartment of this annex building was occupied by Brother and Sister-in-law Ho Wing and their family. I was often sent over to pay our respects to Brother and Sister Wing, whose eldest child was a year older than me. After World War II Brother Wing and his wife moved to Bonham Road, and Hesta's mother, Mrs Hung Chi-ye, came to stay in the annex. She was a friendly, warm elderly lady whom I had known quite well before Hesta married into our family. I would occasionally drop in to visit her and her daughter Phyllis after I had attended an afternoon Chinese lecture at the Hok Hoi Library, which was on the same terrace as their home. Later Mrs Hung moved to the flat above our garage that provided accommodation for two cars and the chauffeur's quarters behind it.

A prominent feature of the gardens at Idlewild was a large rockery dotted with many little figurines, bridges, houses, pagodas, pavilions, steps, and other small objects that had been produced by a famous factory in Fat Shan (Fo Shan), near Guangzhou. In a pond below the rockery there were a variety of goldfish, so the whole area held a special fascination for all who came in contact with it, especially the children. Up one flight of steps leading from the formal garden we maintained an orchid house. This nursery was built on stilts made of brick and mortar, with a strong cement floor, pillars, and shelves. The walls were constructed of spaced woven strips of strong bamboo so that

it was always well ventilated. Lady Margaret and Mamma were both fond of orchids, and the Idlewild gardener was an expert in their culture. Many pots of maidenhair ferns were also cultivated there. When we were young the orchid house was usually full of the many varieties of plant being nurtured. Each pot had a little bamboo stick label stuck in the soil at the side indicating, in Chinese, the particular variety of orchid. Apart from the expense of growing them, orchids demand highly specialised horticultural skills. The soil used was "pond earth" that was dried and then broken up into little cubes. The soil was purchased from Guangzhou, probably from some special gardens up there. Eventually either Lady Margaret lost interest in this specialty or the new head gardener in later years was not an expert in it. It may even have simply been World War II that brought about the change, as it changed so many activities, but orchid cultivation at Idlewild gradually ended.

Further up from the orchid house was a tennis court, but few people other than Robbie's children, Bobbie and Min, ever seemed to use it. I sometimes saw them practising there, just hitting the ball against the wall. But most of the tennis court ground had rows and rows of nursery pots laid out on it as the gardeners prepared either for the annual Horticultural and Flower Show or to change all the pot plants throughout Idlewild, especially those in the reception rooms. Beyond the tennis court there was a wide path beside which stood a gazebo known as "A Pavilion to Look at the Moon," a popular idea in Chinese gardens. The gazebo was a little way off the main road and near another long flight of steps that led to the uppermost levels of the property. After the long flight of steps, there was another vegetable garden and some quarters for the gardener and his family.

Two of the houses Father bought on the Peak, Nos 49 and 50, were situated on a fairly steep hillside below Mount Kellett Road. There was a zig-zag roadway leading downhill that finally divided in two directions, the eastern branch leading to a two-storeyed house (No 49) that was called the Chalet, and the western branch leading to the bungalow (No 50) known as the Dunford. However, as children we always spoke of them by their numbers in Chinese, which was our preferred language of conversation. Grandma, indeed all of us plus the staff, lived in these two houses. Mamma had a room in both these dwellings, alternately staying with us or with Father in his home. The third house, No 83, was a bungalow situated in Aberdeen Road and known as the Neuk. This

was Father's own home.

There was a footpath connecting the fork of the road to No 49 with Aberdeen Road. It took between 10 and 20 minutes for the trip down to Father's home, depending on how fast we intended to go. When we were very young, those of us who could not walk very well were carried piggyback late each afternoon to have the evening meal with Mamma. As far as I can remember, this was when Father was seriously ill and Mamma could not leave him to come and have supper with us. Sometimes we were carried up again by the servants to sleep at No 50, but at other times we stayed on at No 83 for the night, with mattresses laid out for us on the floor of Father's sitting room.

In those days, around 1910-14, air-conditioning was unheard of and even the wealthy European families had to rely on some youngster pulling the rope of a punkah to cool the main room inside their home. Electric fans were also a rarity, especially among Chinese families, whose household method of cooling would be the ubiquitous hand-held fan, of which there were many different types. The most common and least expensive Chinese fan was probably the "palm fan," which was so useful and effective that we would observe ladies of status—such as Madame Sun Yat-sen, who had given me a photograph of herself with Madame Kang Ke Qing—each using one. Yet the self-same fans were also used by the poorest coolie. They are simply made in cottage industries in areas of China where the palm tree and bamboo grow profusely and in proximity. A leaf of the palm tree with a stalk length of about eight inches is used. The attached leaf is cut into a round disc of about a foot in diameter and the edges are bound. Binding is accomplished by using two strips of split bamboo as supports, with a piece of thinly sliced bamboo or rattan bark as the thread that holds them together.

Our family's move to the Peak in May 1906 caused quite a stir at the time because it broke what today would be called the racial barrier. In 1904 the Hong Kong government had passed a new law called the Peak District Reservation Ordinance, which declared the following: "A certain area delineated by the altitude of 788 ft and west of an imaginary line drawn in a north/south direction on the map of Hong Kong, including Mt Cameron, Mt Gough, Mt Kellet, and Victoria Peak, is to be called the Peak District." The ordinance made it unlawful for anyone to allow "any but non-Chinese" to reside in the Peak District.

However, Section Four of the ordinance read: "It shall be lawful for the Governor in Council to exempt any Chinese from the operation of this Ordinance on such terms as the Governor in Council shall think fit." Section Five exempted certain people from the restriction, including "household servants or visitors, licensed chair and rickshaw coolies, contractors and labourers actually employed in the district, and inmates of hotels or hospitals." Section Six referred to how those who infringed the ordinance would be dealt with. Around 1906, there were three houses at the Peak that had come up for sale, so Father considered the Ordinance a "Heaven-sent opportunity" and arranged to buy all three. Meanwhile, he also applied to the government to allow him and his family to stay at the Peak, in accordance with Section Four of the Ordinance. Doubtless to say, he must have given full reasons for his request by referring to the long illnesses of his son, Eddie, which the family doctor could substantiate. In due course the application was approved, and we became the first Chinese or Eurasian family to be granted such a privilege.

There were many disadvantages to living on the Peak, not the least of which was transport. In those days the only means of contact with the lower levels of Hong Kong was via the Peak tram, which is hauled by cable from a winch house at the top of the mountain. This ran a scheduled service until 11:45 pm. The alternative was to negotiate the Old Peak Road, but this was long and steep and it took much time, stamina, and energy to travel it on foot. Personally, I tried going up that route only once. From 1916 to 1918, Mamma had gone travelling again. As there was to be a good Chinese opera performance at the Ko Sing Theatre, our amahs agreed to take us with them. However, because we planned to catch the last tram back to the Peak, we would have had to leave before the show was over. As is often the case, the last act was so tense that we were all reluctant to move, so we stayed on and missed the last tram. When we arrived at the station and discovered our mistake, we decided that the only alternative was to walk up Peak Road, which we did, but it took us two hours to climb. The reverse journey, too, had its problems. I remember one day, around 1917 or so, we children all trooped down the Peak Road together. As usual, Eva and I had aimed at taking the 7:45 am tram to go to our school in Kowloon. When we arrived at the station in our private rickshaws, we found that the tram was being repaired. As this work would take several hours, we decided to go down by road. By running part of the way we finally arrived at

school just after 10 am. Normally we would have arrived at around 8:30 am, but classes did not start until 9 am. When we told our teacher Miss Bascombe that the Peak tram was out of order and that we had run practically all the way down the Peak Road, she found it difficult to believe us.

Although our family had found the "loophole" in the ordinance that enabled us to reside on the Peak, many other Chinese families could not help feeling discriminated against. A similar racial prejudice angered those who were denied membership in the Hong Kong Club or stewardship of the Jockey Club. Although racing days always attracted tens of thousands of Chinese patrons, it was to be many decades before this irksome anomaly was righted. It took the Battle of Hong Kong, during World War II, to finally convince the British and other Westerners that both the Chinese and the Eurasian communities were ready to fight and die side by side with all others to defend Hong Kong. Consequently, the Peak District (Residence) Repeal Ordinance No 10 was passed in 1946, which allowed Chinese to buy or build houses on the Peak, thereby removing a legitimate grievance.

In the early days there were not many houses on the Peak, so they were numbered consecutively without naming the road upon which they stood. A typical address might simply read No 50, the Peak, and this was sufficient for the postman or tradespeople to identify. Public sedan chair coolies were stationed at the Upper Peak Tram Station to take passengers to their ultimate destination. Those called by telephone to pick up a fare found it easier to learn the various house numbers than to try and remember the names of roads, which were all displayed in English. I believe the numbering started with the road up Victoria Peak, just next to the Upper Peak Tram Station, where the then Governor and his wife lived in a house called Mountain Lodge. When I was a child it was occupied by Sir Henry and Lady Blake, who were afterwards succeeded by Sir Henry May and his wife, both of whom I knew personally. Lady May was friendly to all the local school children, especially those of us who were members of her Ministering Children's League.

Two of our houses, Nos 49 and 50, were situated down a fairly steep hillside from an access road branching off Mount Kellett Road, just before it circled round the hill of that name. Later, after World War I, the War Memorial Hospital was built opposite the top of our road. Both of the houses were later sold and razed to make way for blocks of



flats. In recent years, when visiting Hong Kong, I usually make a nostalgic pilgrimage to the top of that roadway and gaze down upon the two apartment blocks and surrounding scenery that still evokes vivid memories of the life and times of our family there. Our other Peak house, called the Falls, was built by its first owner, who later sold it to us while Eva and I were away at our studies abroad. Therefore it never conjured up the same happy childhood memories.

Our telephone number was 8, the Peak. The instrument (and the number) had probably been left behind by Mr Richards, one of the area's first residents and the man from whom Father had bought the property. The telephone number for Idlewild was 59. All of this may sound strange today, considering that Hong Kong now has one of the most comprehensive and modern personal and business telephone networks in the world. Indeed the territory has been forced by burgeoning demand for telecommunications services to use eight digits for each subscriber number.

In those old Peak houses, we had only cold running water, and there were no water closets. The kitchen, however, housed a huge covered boiler with its own tap, which supplied enough hot water for everyone in the house. The servants would fetch water in buckets from this boiler in order to prepare our baths. Apart from three bedrooms, the bungalow at No 50 had a dining room with a piano at one end. This room doubled as a classroom for our English and music lessons. Sometimes we had an expert on Chinese boxing come to teach us what is sometimes called shadow boxing. The remaining room of that house was originally a sitting room in which Eddie would sometimes entertain his friends before partaking of the evening meal. In that room, we would even learn a little ballroom dancing from his Portuguese friends, Luis Gutteres and his three sisters. One sister, a pretty girl named Julia, Eddie seemed quite fond of. Our orchestra was a wind-up HMV (His Master's Voice) gramophone upon which we played one-step, foxtrot, and waltz dance records. At other times we would all troop over to No 49 where, because the accommodation was more like a sitting room, we would have to roll up a couple of carpets before we could dance.

Mamma later bought a second-hand billiards table that almost filled the sitting area, and Eddie became quite proficient at the game. We girls seldom tried to play because we were afraid we might tear a hole in the green felt covering. The table provided Eddie with a good deal of walking exercise, and sometimes his friends would come to No

49 to play as well. The dancing practice stood us in good stead when we later became "blue stockings" and had to help at all five university men's hostels whenever they held dance parties. All the same, once we had left The University of Hong Kong, I for one hardly ever danced again, despite the fact that for many years I lived amidst the milieu of western culture in London and New York City. I never enjoyed dancing as much as most young people do because I was always too busy and, like mah-jong, felt it was a waste of time.

### T H R E E

## Childhood

**M**y early recollections differ in many ways from those of young girls today. Naturally, I retain many personal memories related to my own activities. Yet with regard to certain aspects of the family, my knowledge is hazy even though we were very close. One of the reasons for this is because there were some things that were never mentioned. Father and Lady Margaret were first generation Eurasians while Mamma, whose parents were both first generation Eurasians, was second generation. The Eurasian community, which tended to intermarry, was rather isolated. The Chinese community did not respect them, and the British did not accept them. The British who married into Asia did not normally live with their Chinese families, so it was an embarrassing situation for Father and those of his generation. He did not like to talk about it and, in the main, I continue to respect his wishes to this day. Some things we heard from our mothers and some from friends. Father probably decided that if he made good financially then he would have status. Consequently, he persevered in his business interests and liked to call himself a financier. Even so, we still did not really know very much about what he did. That is why I previously wrote a book on Mamma and not on him, because we knew much more about her. Father was a director of many companies, and one would have to study their records for a fuller story about him. Through these directorships he had a chance to know what was going on in the business world, and after his long illness he retired at the age of 40 to attend to his own business affairs. He never again worked for anyone.

We children hardly ever saw Father, mainly due to his continuous illness. I vividly remember once tiptoeing along the wide

veranda of his house just to catch a glimpse of him in bed. Having satisfied my curiosity, I quickly sneaked away again. I must have been quite young then, certainly under six. There was a piano in the sitting room of his house and occasionally, when we were sleeping there for a few nights, we were allowed to practice our music if it did not disturb him. One day I was doing just that when a servant came out and told me to go on playing without stopping, which perhaps would help lull Father to sleep. I was scared stiff that I might not be able to do as Father had bid, but evidently I succeeded because the servant eventually came back to say that I could stop playing as Father had had his sleep.

Father used to tell us stories about what he did in his younger days at school and afterwards. He was in the second-top class of the newly built Wan Chai Government School when the board invited pupils from that senior year to apply for the post of Chinese language teacher. Some students, including Father, applied for the job and each was given an oral exam and then a written one. Father's English teacher, who was invigilating, came around and whispered softly to him: "Hey, there is really no future in this job." Father had to write from memory a passage from the *Thousand Character Text*, so he deliberately made two mistakes. When the results were announced, it was stated that Father had come first in the oral exam, but second in the written test, so they gave the job to the other student. Father told this story years later to the then director of the Education Department, Dr D.J. Crozier, who had come to visit Father at Idlewild. "I was stupid," said Father, "I should not have made those mistakes. I should have let them announce that I had come out best and then abdicate so that the second fellow could have the job." Dr Crozier, who was quite a diplomat, replied: "Yes, sir. We have lost a good colleague, but we have gained a great benefactor of education in Hong Kong."

Father later applied for a post with the Chinese Maritime Customs in Guangzhou. They wanted people who could read, write, and speak both Chinese and English. When the applicants all lined up outside, there were obviously many who were older and perhaps wiser than Father—erudite scholars and other learned people. There were even some who did not like Father because he was Eurasian. His hair was not pure black so it was easy to see that he was not pure Chinese. One of them said: "You don't stand a chance. Why do you even bother?" He answered: "Because I just want to try my luck." He got the job and worked in the Customs Service for a while before resigning to join a

large import/export company in Hong Kong. Father stayed with the firm, Jardine Matheson and Co, for some years before branching out on his own. He had great foresight and business acumen, so when an English friend asked him to buy some property in the centre of Hong Kong bordered on all four sides by streets, he successfully accomplished the task. The intricacies of the transaction were difficult, but through sheer perseverance Father succeeded and made a substantial commission on this, his first major deal. Sometimes he would see a certain property for sale that had promise and would buy it. He also invested in stocks and shares, and I remember one period, after his long illness, during which his broker would call Father's secretary every morning to give him the latest market quotations. Father would order: "Buy this" or "sell that."

Although all this did not mean much to me at the time, there was a brief period in 1932 when, as an adult, I became Father's secretary in England. He had another broker there who would buy on his behalf China Reorganisation Bonds, which were at that time quite a big deal. I asked Father what he intended to do with so many bonds, and he told me he wanted to give them to China. By this action, he reasoned, he would be helping the country acquire as many bonds as possible. I once said to his broker: "He gives you a lot of business." The broker replied: "Well, he certainly keeps me busy."

We children only saw Lady Margaret occasionally, usually if she and we happened to be staying at No 83 at the same time. On the other hand, we were frequently down at Idlewild, especially during special occasions such as the first two days of the Lunar New Year, when we would have both lunch and dinner there. Similarly, Lady Margaret would come up to have dinner with us on other memorial days, such as the anniversaries of Mamma's maternal ancestors from the Cheung family. Mamma was able to ask Father to allow her to have their memorial tablets placed in her home when her brother's household was unavoidably broken up and he left for north China. If there was a birthday party for any of us, either at the Peak or at Idlewild, Lady Margaret would naturally join us. In other words, she was in reality an integral senior member of our family, though most of the time we stayed in different houses. For the spring and autumn memorial days, Ching Ming and Ch'ung Yeung, three or four roasted pigs—one for each grave—would be brought to the cemetery, a duty for which Idlewild was responsible. The graves were those of Father's mother, Lady Margaret's

mother, father's concubine, and our brother Henry. The Peak household or the Tung Lin Kok Yuen Temple (which Mamma had built mainly with money given to her by Father) looked after the graves of Mamma's ancestors, because she wanted only vegetarian offerings to be placed on them. During the afternoon, members of the Idlewild staff, sometimes supervised by Lady Margaret herself or by her assistant Miss Au, would have the meat carefully carved in appropriate portions and weighed on a simple Chinese balance scale in accordance with records kept from year to year. The portions, which would be distributed to various members of the Ho clan, each had the name of the recipient written on a small piece of red paper. These were busy, but happy activities, carried out in the backyard at Idlewild behind the pantry. If the staff were not too busy, we children might be offered a small piece of roast pork to nibble on—a tasty, delicious treat that was always welcome.

The other occasions on which we would visit Idlewild for a meal, generally in the evenings, were the anniversaries of the births and deaths of several ancestors. Before World War II, elders of the Ho Fook and Ho Kam-tong families; our Seventh Aunt, Mrs Wong Kam-fook; and the Ho Wing family were invited to these dinner gatherings. A few old ladies and some of our cousins and their wives might also attend. They would make up a complement of perhaps three large round tables set out in the Marble Room. Outside caterers were generally hired to do the cooking, and they would bring all the necessary equipment, including some huge woks. The cooks would work in the courtyard so that the food could be brought directly into the Chinese sitting room piping hot. Naturally, before we sat down to dine, some of the food would first be served in little dishes and placed at the family shrine for our ancestors and, accordingly, we would all be called upon to pay our individual respects.

During most of the years referred to in this chapter, from 1906 to 1912, since my father was quite ill it was fortunate for both my parents that our maternal grandmother, P'aw P'aw, was able to stay with us most of the time. She was very affectionate to all of us, but I think her favourites were Vic and Daisy—Vic, because she was Mamma's first-born and a good helper to P'aw P'aw in looking after all of us, and Daisy because she understood that the child was a slow learner and sympathised with her. To P'aw P'aw's delight, when Daisy had her tenth birthday on the 29th day of the 11th lunar month (January 9, 1910), Mamma arranged a special dinner to celebrate the occasion. The food included a dish of

roast goose especially for P'aw P'aw. Two years later, when P'aw P'aw died after a short illness, it was possible that after Mamma, Daisy was the one who lost the most by her passing.

At first the servants were told not to let us know that P'aw P'aw had died until after we had been to Idlewild to pay our respects at our family shrine, as was our custom during such festive days, especially Chinese New Year. According to superstition it would be unlucky for our family to have everyone so unhappy and weeping when we wished the ancestors a Happy New Year. However, by the time we got to the Upper Peak Tram Station "the cat was let out of the bag" accidentally. Throughout the whole 10-minute tram journey we all sobbed bitterly, as P'aw P'aw had been dearly loved by everyone. Mamma was terribly sad that her beloved mother had passed away so suddenly and I, who was very close to Mamma and always empathised with her, wept bitterly all that New Year's Day.

On the following morning, I woke up feeling sick, so much so that I could not attend P'aw P'aw funeral. Eventually, it was discovered that I was suffering from measles and, of course, several of my siblings were also in line for the disease fairly soon. We were treated with traditional Chinese herbal medicines, but a Western doctor also came to see us. I had a severe case; as the Chinese say, this was because a funeral is supposed to be "unclean." I was told that my measles spots had come out and gone back in again, which was quite dangerous. The traditional Chinese method of treatment included bathing the skin with a brew that included parsley and observing a strict diet. The Chinese make "milk wafers"—thin slices of salted milk, pressed out with a mould and looking somewhat like cheese. We were allowed to eat the wafers with congee or "chuk," which is simply a little rice boiled in an excess of water. We were also allowed fish, and I thoroughly enjoyed the salted milk wafers, as I still do when I can get them. The wafers are produced at one of the villages near Hong Kong, Dai Leung, and they can sometimes be bought in the territory cleverly arranged in an attractive circle within a glass bottle full of salt water. I remember all my siblings, from Daisy to Robbie, catching measles soon after I did. It was almost fun convalescing together. Grace also caught the disease but as she was only a baby she stayed at No 50 to be specially looked after by the old motherly amah, Yee P'aw. Jean escaped measles that time but later, as an adult, she contracted the disease and I believe had a very bad time indeed. Hence the Chinese belief is perhaps well-founded that if there

is one case of measles in the family, it is as well to let all the children catch it at the same time.

After Grandma died, Mamma decided she would henceforth refrain from eating meat. So that the cook's work would not be made too difficult, she was at first willing to eat vegetables cooked with the meat. I was so devoted to Mamma that I often took it as my job to help pick out the meat, which I served to my siblings, leaving the vegetables in gravy for her. I recall that one of the dishes common to all our tastes was fried chicken and walnuts. I became quite adept in separating the small ingredients, taking a spoonful out of the dish, putting the chicken parts back, and giving Mamma the vegetable pieces that were thus left on my spoon. At other times the cook might make a chicken or lamb stew and I would deal with the separation in a similar way.

Vic, of course, also missed P'aw P'aw terribly, but in her case she could face the situation better; she simply "stepped up" and carried on helping all of us and Mamma. Unconsciously, she had been an understudy for Grandma ever since she returned from her trip to America. As the Diocesan Girls' School had moved to Kowloon and she had already reached the second-highest class, Vic and Mamma evidently felt it was too long a journey for her to undertake each day on her own. So Vic opted to stay at home to help Grandma look after all of us before she died. Vic told me that Father had offered to send her to England for further studies but she declined. She felt that with all the responsibilities she had assumed, coupled with the fact that Mamma could never have coped without both P'aw P'aw and herself in looking after all of us younger ones, her decision was the correct one. I remember one of the duties that she undertook every day was to look through every single garment that the wash amah brought in a large wicker basket. Vic would sort out the ones that needed mending before returning the clothes to our own amahs for folding and storage.

Apart from our immediate family, we had a large number of servants. In those days it was regarded as charitable to give work to these workers fresh from their villages and devoid of anything but the most simple skills. As they would have found it difficult to obtain employment elsewhere, our home became something of a training centre for those wishing to obtain work in town. Some of these people wanted to find a good home to "belong to" and a regular salary to send home to their family and relatives. No matter how small, what our workers earned in



those days had a sizeable purchasing power, especially in their home villages. We all regarded our servants almost as members of the family, and many of them firmly planted their roots with us and stayed on, some for decades, others for life. Occasionally, one or another might find a better job elsewhere and Mamma would let them go. I do not think she ever discharged anyone, however unsatisfactory they may have been. There was always some task she could give them once she had taken them into her employ.

Because of their importance to the household and our close relationship with them, our servants form an indelible part of my reminiscences. Among the more notable members of our staff was Auntie Shui, the mother of Lady Margaret's principal aide, Ms Au Choi, who had come to us as a servant girl. The mother lived with us at the Peak, while the daughter stayed on at Idlewild. Auntie Shui's main duty was to look after little Robbie and Jean. Also memorable is Yee P'aw (Yee Jieh when she was younger), who was a member of our staff for as long as I can remember, staying on even after the beginning of World War II. Grace was her special charge, and she was especially kind and loving to her. Yee P'aw was also senior amah for Florence, although Florence got on better with the younger amah Oi Jieh, who was called Oi P'aw when she was older (Jieh means elder sister and P'aw means granny). When Daisy married in 1924, Mamma assigned Oi Jieh to her home in Hankow. Geen Chuk, whom I have already mentioned, was originally Daisy's amah. It was this stout, jolly old servant who foretold the birth of Florence and won the 20 cent bet from us in the process.

The word amah, by the way, is borrowed from the Indian subcontinent and simply means "adult female servant." When we were quite little, there were two other middle-aged amahs. One was called Lai Jieh, whose chief responsibility was to look after Eva and myself. The other was Mei Jieh, our general purpose amah (Dah Jarp in Cantonese, but probably known by some other name in northern China). She fetched food from the kitchen, cleared off the dinner table, and afterwards washed the dishes. She swept, cleaned, and tidied all the rooms. Lai Jieh and the other amahs looking after the children did not have to sweep floors or do any other menial tasks. On the whole, our amahs were neither idle nor overworked. There were no washing or drying machines and no running hot water, only a cauldron of hot water in each kitchen at Nos 49 and 50. In those days there were no wrinkle-free, drip-dry fabrics so the wash amah and her assistant had to hand

wash and iron each and every piece of clothing. The wash amah's name was Ah Woon, so we called her Woon Jieh. She eventually left to work for Eddie and his family after their return to Hong Kong.

Besides these adult female members of staff, for many years Lady Margaret and Mamma each had several servant girls. The families of these girls were all so poor that they were grateful if they could find someone willing to accept one of their daughters to be trained in housework and eventually married off to some suitable young man. The mistress's family would invariably give some lai see (red packet containing money) to the girl's parents. In each case, families such as ours would take care of the girl from then on and eventually provide her with a suitable dowry. After their marriage, many of these girls would return to our homes on festive occasions, just as they would have visited their own families. One servant, Sui Sin (Hyacinth), returned to Idlewild each year on New Year's Day while another, So Sum (Pure of Heart), married but returned to work for Father as his practical nurse and served him until his death. She lived on at Idlewild for about a year on the legacy he gave her. One of Mamma's girls went travelling with her to Tsingtao where a family friend, acting as matchmaker, found a Cantonese husband for the girl in that city. Both Lady Margaret and Mamma gave fancy names to their servant girls. Of those at the Peak, we had Beautiful Bamboo, Green Lotus, Little Plum Blossom, Pretty Plum Blossom, and so on.

We did not have many men servants, but there was the butler, Chan Ah-bun, whom we had inherited from Mr Richards. The butler, who doubled as our odd-job man, looked after all the tasks that needed a man's hand, especially when dealing with workmen and tradespeople. We also had two male cooks and two male gardeners. To round off this list of staff, our chair bearers and rickshaw pullers are worthy of mention. At first we had only four, all of whom had been in our employ for years. They all had nicknames, such as Big-head Foon, Big-eyed Mui, Pock-marked Kwan, or Monkey Ming. Three of these brave men went down to the lower lawn to catch a huge python that Chan Ah-pun discovered one night. The fourth man was so scared that he covered himself up in bed and hid. Incidentally, they all wore uniforms made of heavy calico trimmed with a navy and white patterned border. In order to have them look fresh and clean, the uniforms were regularly washed and starched by the wash amah.

Father stayed inside his house at No 83, the Peak, for many years.

He was so ill that the family thought he was dying. He could not eat nor sleep but refused to have any doctor treat him. He and Mamma knew his condition best, and she trained all the staff to take care of him. Father lost a lot of weight, and we have a couple of photos showing him looking like a skeleton with skin stretched over it. At one point he was down to 68 lbs and could only be weighed by sitting on a chair placed on top of a large weighing-scale. An insomniac by night, Father took "cat naps" during the day. Because he was a light sleeper, everyone in the household had to keep extra quiet during these times. In fact, a servant girl would go round the house ringing a little bell to announce that Father was trying to take a nap. Finally, by good fortune, someone found and recommended to my parents a kind of powder called Revalenta Arabeca Food, manufactured in England, which had to be cooked with water to make a gruel and then served to him. In this way he gradually recovered his health.

Mamma was a devout Buddhist and used to teach us simple prayers. One that I remember was simply: "Please bless my Father so that he can eat, sleep, and walk." She was also a good Confucianist, which is not a spiritual kind of religion, although Confucius himself prayed to Heaven and Earth. I always regard myself as a Confucianist because I can understand his philosophy and ideas and try to live according to his principles. I find that Confucianism is most appropriate for me because Buddhist scriptures are difficult to understand. But whenever my mother and her temple held Buddhist ceremonies, I participated if I could. She always had a shrine in her home and I, too, have my little shrine as well. When we were children, before each meal and at other times we were taught to kowtow at the shrine and pray. Confucianism is not a code of ethics but a philosophy of life. Confucius had spiritual values and he prayed. When he got sick, one of his disciples asked him: "Shouldn't you pray?" He replied: "I've prayed long ago. I pray to Heaven and Earth and to the Gods of Heaven. "People who follow Confucianism carry out traditional ceremonies such as burning incense and candles, just as Roman Catholics or Buddhists and Taoists do. The Confucianists feel that there are many things beyond human control and that there is some supernatural power, but they do not usually refer to a "personal God." I accept the idea of Heaven as a Power, not just a place. It seems much bigger and more powerful than a personal God, although I agree that for many people a personal God seems to better satisfy their needs. If there is a personal God, His

followers feel they can talk to Him in prayer and that, too, would seem to help a lot.

We were exposed to Christianity because the school Mamma chose for us was a good English Christian establishment, the Diocesan Girls' School. Mamma was a little concerned that we might want to become Christians, but at the same time she felt our education was more important. So despite the "danger" she let us attend this Christian school, where we read the Scriptures as our first lesson every morning for four years. I once won the "Scripture" prize competed for by the three top classes. Although I regarded it as just another subject to study, I came to know some books of the Bible very well. Later, when a missionary friend of mine said: "I can't understand it, Miss Ho. You try to be good, you try to be kind to poor people, and yet you are not a Christian." I replied: "You don't have to be a Christian to be good." Without doubt, my mother lived what you would call a good Christian life, but she was not a Christian according to some people's interpretation of the word. When my eldest sister Vic was extremely ill, a missionary friend said to my mother: "You know, Lady Ho Tung, if you let Victoria become a Christian she is sure to get better. If not, I'm sure God will take her away." Mamma retorted: "I'm sorry. If Christ can make her better, Buddha will. If Buddha can't, Christ can't either. If she were conscious and wanted to become a Christian, I wouldn't stand in her way. But since she is unconscious, I can't just make her a Christian." Actually, towards the end of her life, Victoria became a devout Buddhist.

In England there was another missionary who lived in the same boarding house that we stayed in. She came and knelt down beside my mother and said: "Lady Ho Tung, you may be well off now and happy, but what God has given, God can take away." Mamma replied: "Oh, Heaven forbid! I'm sorry but I can't change my religion. My mother and my grandmother all grew up with traditional Chinese religious ideas, and I just can't change my religion." That is why I tell my Christian friends: "Don't try to convert me; if you try, you'll lose a friend." Unlike Christianity, Chinese religions are not mutually exclusive. Mamma was more a Buddhist than a Confucianist. Buddhism is a religion that came from India, with many Chinese being Buddhist and many Taoist. Our family were never really Taoist, but I have many friends who knew or could discourse on Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. I also have many Christian friends, and we respect each other's right to hold our own religious ideas and beliefs. Anyway, we were all encouraged to

give proper regard to our education. Mamma always said that "time is precious, don't waste it," so she filled our lives with all sorts of training and activities.

As in every family, death was to visit our house with its attendant sadness to remind us all of the loss we suffered as a result of someone's passing. Mamma died when she was only 62. She was altogether too self-sacrificing, and a series of circumstances combined to wear her out, as will be described in due course. Lady Margaret lived to be about 80, but Ah Jieh, the concubine, contracted tuberculosis and died when she was quite young. The first funeral I witnessed at close hand was in 1911 when Ah Jieh died. I vividly recall that when she was alive we all visited Idlewild for the various festivals. The sedan chair bearers would carry her to the side gate and then convey her piggyback up the flight of steps, over the broad walks, and then up the narrow flight of stairs directly to our room for family meals. We would always have lunch together, and even though she had separate utensils she always ate at the same table with us. Because Ah Jieh had no son, my younger brother Robbie was "adopted" by her, but without giving up his position as one of Mamma's children. Robbie was therefore designated to "buy" the water when she died to give her an imaginary sponge bath—a ceremony that is traditional for Chinese funerals.

Ah Jieh died on the 25th day of the 12th moon, just a few days before Chinese New Year. Because the festival period was approaching, Father was in residence at Idlewild instead of at the Peak. He had heard the funeral music from his room, because Ah Jieh's house was on a terrace above Caine Road quite close to Idlewild. In traditional Chinese funerals, the procession is led by two large lanterns, carried by men on foot, on which the surname of the bereaved family is displayed in large Chinese characters in blue so that passers-by would know who the bereaved family was. As the funeral procession passed by, Father told one of his servants: "Go to the veranda and look to see which family it is." Of course it was the Ho family procession, but Father was told another name. He did not learn of Ah Jieh's death for another two years, by which time he was in better health. He had a eulogy composed to her memory, which he took to read at her graveside. It was then burnt as an offering to her soul.

In my early childhood I was extremely timid, quiet, and sensitive. Unlike other children I was not very active, perhaps partly

because I was rather clumsy. I frequently fell down, bruised my knees, and, at times, made large holes in my stockings. Because I was the youngest in my class at home, Old Master Chiu one day told me to go out and play. I did not go, but instead busied myself rearranging the books and papers in my desk. Later, when he returned, he said: "You were told you could go off to play." I replied: "I am just playing with my books." That was typical of me at the time, and as a result I led a somewhat solitary childhood. Mr Chiu Tsi-gai, style-named Kut Um, was not only our teacher and tutor, but also a friend and father-figure to us all. In return, I am sure that he felt very much part of our family as well. At any rate, he stayed in our home throughout the year, apart from brief visits to his old village to celebrate the Ching Ming festival and visit the graves of his ancestors who were buried there.

Eva was only 15 months older than me, but she was more than half a head taller, and active and energetic. Sometimes we were great pals, but generally she played or chatted with Eddie when he was around. Eddie was also very kind to Florence, who was 13 years his junior; indeed she still worships his memory, having a fairly large photo of them both in her bedroom in England. I felt that I was too old to play with Robbie, Jean, and Grace, who were two, four and six years younger than me. Florence was 11 years younger than me, and I always felt motherly towards her. However, before she was old enough to join us, nearly all the children would get together and just relax on the lawn in the lower tennis court, especially in the cool of late afternoon or early evening. At other times I liked to wander around the grounds of the house, especially after a heavy downpour of rain, to see if there were any little crabs in the wide nullah beside the upper tennis court or to gather the little red sprouts that poked their heads out of hillside crevices. I called these my little carrots and would pick a few nasturtium leaves to serve as plates upon which I would place some other wild vegetation and serve "tea" to my imaginary guests. Someone had actually given me a toy China teaset, but I only played with it occasionally, fearful I might break it. More often, I would use my make-believe teaset obtainable free from the hillside. I am afraid that this characteristic has stayed with me right into my old age. But nowadays I urge myself to use and enjoy the items that people give me, rather than hoard them. After all, that was the intention behind the gift.

After we moved to the Peak, most of the time we dressed in European clothes. Our family had two live-in tailors who worked at a

table at the far end of the wide enclosed veranda. Our desks and the teacher's desk occupied a special area of their own on the veranda just short of the tailors' workplace. Although we had our own in-house clothesmakers, each year just before Christmas we girls would be sent to a well-known dressmaker, Miss Fairall, who would make each of us a new party dress. The dressmaker gave a big party for all her customers, mainly the European community's children and especially those who lived at the Peak. We did not know them, but we had all been invited. At the party there was a huge Christmas tree topped by a big doll that everyone admired. After tea and cakes, individual presents with our names written on them were handed out. Each of us then picked out a little piece of folded paper from a bowl. I remember that at first I did not know what it was for and wandered around with it clutched in my hand. Then a grown-up asked to see my ticket and told me, "You have won the prize." So the beautiful big doll from the top of tree was mine and mine alone; I was, needless to say, overjoyed.

Mamma was not at home when we got back from the party, but the amahs in charge were full of admiration for the doll, saying: "It's so beautiful, we had better put it away for you." I simply accepted their decision and for many years stupidly never thought of asking for the doll to play with. I was a university student helping the staff to tidy some trunks in the boxroom when I came across that lovely doll again. Reluctantly, I returned it to the trunk because by that time I had neither the time nor the inclination to play with it. It was probably still there during the Battle of Hong Kong in 1941, after which the house was bombed and most of our things, including my beautiful doll, were looted by the invaders.

Many years after my primary school days, in 1933, I was in a nursing home in England for several months taking an enforced rest. At the time I did not feel like reading, but often thought of the big doll that I never played with. So I decided to make one myself. I had some skeins of knitting wool and a variety of other articles, including water-colour paints and some of my own clothes. I also had many rolls of Chinese periodicals that a friend in Guangzhou had sent to me, but I was too busy, too tired, or too lazy to read them. I used one of my pillows for the doll's body, with a medium-size umbrella as its spine, which I sewed in place with a piece of calico. I used the rolled-up periodicals with skeins of wool wrapped around them for the limbs. For the feet I stuffed some wool into the toes and instep and covered the legs with more rolls of

paper stuffed into four pairs of stockings. Mamma, who had had her feet bound in the ancient style when she was young, used this procedure of wearing several pairs of stockings saying that she wanted to add to the size of her feet and legs. I sewed all the appendages onto the pillow and added a worn petticoat to cover the arms. The head I made from an old pair of underpants stuffed with wool and covered with many layers of hairnet. I then outlined the eyebrows, pupils, and nostrils in Chinese ink and used red paint to draw the lips. I called the doll "Judy," a nickname I often used for Lady Margaret's aide, Ms Au Choi, of whom I was quite fond.

Naturally, education was all important when we were young. Vic first went to the Diocesan Girls' School (DGS) in Rose Villa in 1903. By 1906 we had moved to the Peak. She would go alone to DGS every day and after school undertook extra studies in Chinese at home with Old Master Chiu. Vic's Chinese textbook was called *Cheng Yu Kao* (Study of Idiomatic Sayings). It was an anthology, written sometimes in rhyming couplets of famous idioms or wise sayings, grouped by category such as astronomical, weather conditions, human affairs, and so forth. Vic was generally tired after a long day at school. She would travel from the Peak, first by sedan chair to the Peak tram station, then by tram to the next-to-last station at Kennedy Road, and finally by family sedan chair carried by the chair coolies of our town house, Idlewild. There she would be picked up and taken to DGS, then located at Rose Villa, a terrace above Bonham Road. In the afternoon, the journey was reversed.

One day I noticed Vic struggling to learn her lesson aloud, which is normally the best way of committing to memory rhythmic passages of Chinese literature. Meanwhile, Eva was practising her calligraphy. After some time, however, Eva could recite the passage, just by hearing Vic read it aloud over and over again. I was impressed by Eva's excellent memory. When she and I later studied at the Sheung Fu Girls' School, we had to learn everything by heart, which I found difficult although it was no problem for her. She could memorise Chinese poetry after three or four readings, whereas I might have to read the same passages 10 or 12 times. No wonder I regarded myself as a slow learner, with a terrible inferiority complex to match my shortcomings. The Chinese method of learning may be freely translated as follows: "What others can know with one exposure, I should make 100 exposures. What others can do with 10 attempts, I will make 1,000 attempts." If these ways were really



followed, they often worked, but not always.

We all knew that Daisy was not very quick at learning. In those days even Western families would try to hide a retarded child, but Daisy actually participated fully in all our early learning activities: Chinese and English lessons, music (piano), shadow boxing (t'ai chi), swimming, small-cast dramatics, and short Chinese operas. I remember that one of the operas was the *Song of the Lute*, or *P'i P'a Hsing*, for which only Eddie and Eva sung their parts. However, there was a longer well-known opera, "Sixth Master Punishes his Son," in which Daisy acted as the elderly mother who indulges her grandson but scolds her son for being hard on the young boy. It was not until after we took the entrance exam for DGS that I realised that Daisy's educational achievements were considerably below ours. Although she was by then 14, based on her entrance test Daisy was placed in Class Six, the top class in the lower school, with other girls many years her junior. This may have been partly due to the long summer vacation we had in Shanhaikwan that year, although we had tried to keep up our Chinese and English studies while we were there. Mamma decided to have Daisy go to school as a boarder, hoping that the school would thus have more opportunity to help her. She had to repeat Class Six the following year, after which the headmistress, Miss Skipton, visited Mamma to tell her that the school was not really able to take Daisy much further. By then, Daisy was 16 and a half, so she discontinued her studies and stayed at home. Perhaps she was born a half-century too soon, or Hong Kong was too late in making provision for mentally handicapped people. I for one took a keen interest in special education in later life, partly because I could understand the suffering of both Daisy and her parents. However, even into old age, Daisy could still write simply in English and Chinese when necessary.

In a way it must have been a problem for Robbie to grow up in an almost all-female household. The tutor, Master Chiu, was a born teacher and practical psychologist who accomplished a great deal for Robbie's future development. Also, the male servants took a special interest in "Young Master" Robbie. The butler, Chan Ah-bun, acted like a godfather to both Robbie and Jean—and, although Mamma forbade us girls to go into the kitchen, the chief cook always welcomed Robbie to his domain, so much so that he learned to become quite a good cook. In later years, when he had a home in Paris, Robbie was quite definitely the chief cook while his wife Hesta served more as his kitchen assistant. Even at a young age Robbie was quite democratic and was often to be

found in the room occupied by the sedan chair and rickshaw coolies. This, together with the instruction he received from the Old Master, were in all likelihood excellent preparation for Robbie's future career in the Chinese Army.

Old Master Chiu often told us stories that were historical yet at the same time contained some kind of message or moral. I remember one story he told us about two traditional Chinese rulers, Yao and Shun. Some western scholars call them "legendary" rulers, but the Chinese believe they really did exist. Yao and Shun were good men, and the history books will tell you all the fine things they did for their people. Shun, who was a minister under Yao, did so well that when Yao died, people would not go to his son to settle their disputes but would seek assistance from Shun instead. In other words, they treated him as Yao's successor. During his lifetime, Yao had held such a high opinion of Shun that he gave him both his daughters as wives. (This is what Lady Margaret referred to when she applied to Grandma to let Mamma also marry Father.) It is said that Shun had a father and a stepmother who were biased in favour of his younger brother. According to the story, at one time they told Shun to clean up the granary, then they took away the ladder and set fire to the building. Shun had suspected that something was wrong, so he had prepared a huge straw hat beforehand that he used as a parachute to escape from the topmost floor of the blazing grain store. Another time, Shun's parents ordered him to clean the well from bottom to top. Then those terrible parents tried to fill the well with earth. However, Shun had cleverly dug a tunnel and came up by another exit. Then he went back to his room, sat on his bed, and played his zither or "chin," a popular Chinese musical instrument. His younger brother Hsiang, who was a party to the murder attempt, entered the room and feigned surprise at seeing Shun alive. "I've missed you," he said. "I wondered where you had gone, but I am happy to see you again." Shun pretended that he knew nothing about Hsiang's involvement in the scheme. Because his younger brother seemed happy, he was too. In this way Shun showed "Hsiao" (love and respect for one's parents) and "Di" (brotherly love) in the face of extreme adversity.

Among Old Master Chiu's favourite stories was that of Chang Liang, who died in BC 189. Chang eventually became chief counsellor to the founder of the Han dynasty, and the story of his early life espouses the virtues of patience, perseverance, and humility—which, no doubt, was why Master Chiu told it to us. One day, Chang encountered a poor old

man sitting beside a bridge. As Chang approached, one of the old man's sandals fell over the side. Chang climbed under the bridge, picked up the sandal, and put it back on the old man's foot. The elderly fellow asked Chang to meet him at the same place at dawn five days later, but to be there before he arrived. Twice when Chang came along he found that the old man had arrived before him, so a new appointment had to be made. The third time he stayed at the meeting place overnight to be sure of being there first. The old man praised him for his perseverance and gave him a book, saying: "He who studies this book shall become a king's preceptor!" The book provided Chang with such wisdom that his advice helped his patron, Liu Pang, to establish the Han dynasty in BC 202.

The tales told by Master Chiu provided us with numerous examples of common sense and virtue that would help to guide our later lives. One of my favourites was about a rich man who was having a large boat built. While the craftsmen were constructing it, he noticed that they were using a lot of bamboo and wood. When preparing the bamboo they carefully sawed off and discarded the nodules that were of no use and, of course, there were heaps of sawdust left over. The man said to his servants: "Save those things. Don't just throw them away, save them up." The servants were surprised. What could he want the scraps for, they wondered? Many years later there was a war, and the same man needed to build many boats. He was then able to have the bamboo nodules cut up into nails for his wooden craft. During the course of the work it snowed heavily, and the roads became slippery. He ordered his men: "Get that sawdust and sprinkle it on the snow so that the road will become passable."

Wise Master Chiu often repeated the phrase: "See that light coming in from the window? It reaches the table here but later it will have moved perhaps an inch or two. So the saying goes that 'an inch of light is worth an inch of gold, but even an inch of gold cannot buy an inch of light.'" The Old Master would explain: "It is the same with time. Once it has gone, it will never come back again." In addition to our other studies, we also had to practise our Chinese calligraphy under this dedicated teacher. He would explain that apart from being an important Chinese art form, it also steadied the nerves and developed the writer's manual dexterity. Later, when I was abroad, I heard that Master Chiu had passed away. On my return I made enquiries and found the name of the lot and number of his grave at the Chinese Permanent

Cemetery in Aberdeen. While visiting his grave I was pleased to see some remnants of incense and candles that had been burnt at the site, which showed that someone cared for and attended to this ritual for our beloved Old Master.

My other teacher, Master Lo Sheung-fu, wrote a little book that contained reminiscences about his early studies. In this, he strongly advocated that the *Thousand Character Text* should not be used as a textbook for young Chinese children, a sentiment with which I entirely concur, as it is a particularly useless work in imparting learning. Lo Sheung-fu wrote *Memories of the Wan Mu Chao Tang* when he was in his 92nd year, and it was later published by the Hong Kong Cultural Service Co Ltd for the committee dealing with the author's writings posthumously.

Among many other subjects the Chinese primers dealt with are what we call the Eight Virtues, which are worthy of note. We have already discussed the first two, "Hsiao" (love for your parents, or filial piety) and "Di" (fraternal love, or being kind to your siblings). The third one, "Jung," is loyalty in all its forms: to the emperor, the country, your job and employer, or your superior. The fourth, "Hsin," stands for honesty and trustworthiness. It is said, "The Chinaman's word is as good as his bond." The Chinese symbol for trustworthiness is the radical for "man" plus that for "speech," suggesting a man's speech should be as good as his bond. The fifth virtue is "Li" (good manners and politeness). There is much made of good manners, politeness, and one's behaviour in the presence of others embodied in Chinese culture. The sixth, "Yi," is righteousness or doing what is right versus that which you know is wrong. The seventh virtue, "Lien," means to be incorruptible, and the last one, "Chi," represents knowing how to have a sense of shame (or perhaps the difference between right and wrong). At other times, Chinese refer to the five constant virtues, "Jen," meaning kindness, benevolence, humanitarianism. The word for Jen is made up of two characters, "man" and "two"—two persons standing together should be kind to one another or love each other.

As children, after we had finished the *Three Little Red Books*, we started learning the *Four Books* of the Confucian school. Some years ago I came across my old copy of the Confucian Analects, and it was interesting to recall that Master Chiu had used his red brush and carefully punctuated our books for us. He had selected the more difficult words and written out each one in black ink at the top of the

page and then annotated their meaning in smaller characters below, just to help me understand their meaning. Master Chiu was so meticulous that he would carefully note the dates when we had begun, revised, and then finally learnt each section. The *Four Books* comprise the Great Learning, the Doctrine of the Mean, the Confucian Analects, and the Books of Mencius. These are the fundamental traditional texts, and that is why they were the essential books upon which the famous (or notorious) examination system was based. Every scholar who aspired to sit those examinations had to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" those books. They also contained the essence of Confucian thought and teachings that I have already described.

Another story that Master Chiu told us came from the famous historical tome called the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, which has been translated into English. Much Chinese folklore, opera, theatre, and everyday conversation is based on this book. Actually, the Old Master invariably first read a short section aloud to help us become familiar with written Chinese—which in traditional culture is quite different from spoken Chinese—then he would explain the passage clearly and vividly to us, so that we could all understand it and enjoy it. After going through this famous book twice, he also attempted to discourse on the *Many Kingdoms*, a book which we girls did not find nearly so interesting, chiefly because there was so much fighting in it.

When Master Chiu retired, he was succeeded by Mr Liang Ting-yu, a classical Chinese scholar who wrote excellent letters in the vernacular for Mamma and sometimes for me if needed. These were executed in typical Chinese style with beautiful calligraphy. Unfortunately, he was not such a born teacher as Master Chiu and could not impart his undoubtedly deep scholarship. He found it doubly difficult to teach young children and consequently my junior siblings, Jean and Grace, found it hard to learn from him. This was especially so as they had had their timetables reversed to encompass English lessons in the morning with a teacher called Miss Hecht and then further instruction at DGS at a much earlier age than the others. In Florence's case, it was worse still, as she went off to school at the tender age of four. She never really benefited from Mr Liang's learning because although he was still resident in our home, he latterly served mainly as Mamma's secretary and accountant. He was a profound scholar, whereas Mr Chiu was a born teacher.

Besides our Chinese teachers, we had a series of English

governesses, then finally a regular teacher, Mrs Bishop, who was headmistress of the Army school situated just below the Lower Peak Tram Station. Mrs Bishop came to teach the elder children—Daisy, Eddie, Eva, and myself—four times a week from 4 pm to 6 pm after her day's work at the Army school. She was mainly preparing Eddie to enter Queen's College and only taught a few subjects, which, if memory serves, were limited to English grammar and arithmetic, plus some history and geography. Our arithmetic textbook was written by a man named Pendelbury and gave the answers to each problem at the end of the book, an arrangement that I found most useful. Every day, Mrs Bishop would tell us to complete "the next six sums," and after we had done them we could check to see if our answers were correct. If not, I would always try again. After Mrs Bishop had seen them, she would show us on the blackboard how they should have been tackled if she found that we had made mistakes, not only in the answers but in the method as well. Mrs Bishop stayed with us for a year or two, until just before Eddie went off to study at Queen's College and we began our trip to Shanhaikuan in the late spring of 1914.

As I have noted, we all called Master Chiu by the name Lo See in Cantonese, the equivalent of Lao Shih in Mandarin, which can be literally translated in English as Old Master, a sign of deep respect and veneration. Another two children who were educated at the Peak along with us were Charlie and Jimmy Choa (who were about the same age as Daisy and Eddie), the eighth and tenth sons of Mamma's good friend, Mrs Choa. They came up to join us every day by the Peak tram. The lessons were held at our home, No 50 on the Peak. Our "schoolroom" was situated in the wide L-shaped enclosed veranda that ran all along the southern and eastern sides of the house. Inside the schoolroom, the teacher's desk occupied the central corner of the "L," with one short end drawn up along the eastern windowsills. The teacher sat with his back to the southern windows at the centre so that he could keep an eye on all of us. Eva and I shared a big desk at the western end of this arm, face to face, while the others occupied individual desks at different positions. When Mr Chiu called a few of us in groups to go up for instruction, we simply brought our chairs and sat alongside the two free sides of his desk. At the far end of the schoolroom, just before we came to the door to the tennis courts and on the inside wall of the veranda, was a little recess in the wall. It was here that the pole used for our physical exercises stood and where offenders were sent to "smell the rod" as a

disciplinary device.

Many years later, in 1989, the vice-chancellor of The University of Hong Kong, Prof Wang, invited me to lunch at his well-known lodge. In the dining room I sat opposite a large painting of the view from our Peak home, overlooking rolling hills and sandy bays, with the South China Sea beyond. It was the scene I was so keen on as a child. I asked about the origin of the painting and was told that my brother, General Ho Shai-lai, had invited a famous artist of the day whose name was Chiu, to be his house guest at Ho Tung Gardens, our old home. The artist had created the painting there and later presented it to the vice-chancellor. Several of us had got to know the famous artist quite well when we were fellow students in England and, in fact, I was good friends with his two sisters as well.

Looking closer down our hillside, one could see sections of the road winding to Aberdeen village, which was itself hidden, but we could see some of the fishing boats that were always tightly congregated in Aberdeen Harbour. On clear nights we could see large fishing junks with their bright kerosene lights trying to attract fish into their nets. We knew that these nets stretched from one boat to another and sometimes to a third. The hillside was wooded and dark green in colour, with small trees and shrubs. From time to time, on some afternoons after school, the Old Master would take us for a walk down the Aberdeen Road, frequently going as far as the first bridge and sometimes to the second, which spanned a wide stream where we occasionally went down to paddle. There was a third bridge that led to the then "village" of Aberdeen beyond, or to the Tai Shing paper factory there. This factory was demolished to make way for the Aberdeen Industrial School; the site was later used to house the Aberdeen Trade School. From the eastern windows of No 50, the distant views stretched from the War Memorial Hospital, at the top of the hill on our far left, to the Dennisons' house. The latter was later sold to the government and occupied by Sir Selwyn and Lady Selwyn-Clarke prior to Sir Selwyn being knighted. This house overlooked ours while farther on the Police Station atop Mount Cameron seemed to be balanced right on the edge of the hills. When we were teenagers we watched from a distance the construction of the motor road up to the Peak. We felt it was a pity that the landscape should be completely ruined with large patches of bare earth where the hillside had been carved. But of course we also appreciated how useful the road

would become for transport up and down the Peak. Many Hong Kong people must have experienced these mixed feelings as they witnessed the landscape change and the city develop.

For many years, from about 1922, we kept bees at the Peak housed in modern hives on the unused tennis court. I believe the first bees came in a swarm and were caught by some of the rickshaw coolies. They later multiplied into about three hives. When we were at university, we were introduced to Mr Alfred Morris, headmaster of King's College, who also happened to be a keen apiarist. We met him at tea at the home of Prof and Mrs Vickers (he taught us logic), and when Mr Morris heard that we kept bees, he kindly offered to come up to the Peak and teach us something about beekeeping. He would visit us on Saturday afternoons and instilled in Eva and me a deep interest in this interesting hobby. We read books on the insects and how to handle them and ordered special equipment from England for several hives. Unfortunately there were neither enough fruit trees nor flower blossoms to provide sufficient nectar for the bees, and the typhoon winds were quite destructive to the hives, sometimes lifting whole sections of the apiary up and depositing them elsewhere.

I think it was in the summer of 1923, during the Festival of the Seven Sisters, that a typhoon roaring in from the southeast caused tremendous havoc in our garden. In preparing for the wind's approach, the rickshaw coolies had first tied each hive with rope and then put slabs of granite on top of the sloping roofs. However the fierce, swirling winds pushed the rocks over and was soon in the process of lifting the roofs and sections of the hives. Seeing that, Eva and I and a few others rushed out to try and save the bees. We had intended to move the roped hives into the basement under No 50 (the Dunford), but a particularly violent gust of wind threw us to our knees. When we got up we were surprised to see that the typhoon had bent the wrought iron poles of the upper tennis court fence, folded down the wire netting, and swept the heavy wood and iron garden bench from the upper to the lower court where it landed within a few feet of us but did us no harm.

We were lucky not to have been hurt at all and some of the older women servants, watching from a window, shouted to us to give up trying to save the bees. Reluctantly, we followed their advice. Inevitably, the hives suffered serious damage, and the number of bees was substantially reduced. On other occasions, though, it was fun to watch the "big wind" and almost horizontal rain from the safety of our



classroom. One day we saw a typhoon uproot a small tree and carry it some distance to another part of the garden. A typhoon is similar to a hurricane and during the summer months in Hong Kong there are frequent typhoon warnings, with a few actually striking our island. Although most of these warnings proved to be premature, the storm would often pass close by and simply bring a dozen or more inches of rain. When I first went to settle in San Diego, the weather there seemed to be very dry, and I often remarked that Hong Kong would often have as much rainfall in a single downpour as San Diego had in a year.

Mamma was extremely careful about hygiene at the table and always provided everyone with two pairs of chopsticks, generally made of different materials. One pair was to eat with and the other to extract food from the communal dish. We were never allowed to dip our own spoons into a communal bowl for soup, as was done in many other households. We generally each had a separate bowl of soup, however small it might be, and used serving spoons and chopsticks for the communal dishes. Mamma, of course, wanted to prevent as far as was humanly possible the spread of any infectious disease. Tuberculosis was then still prevalent in Hong Kong, and our own Ah Jieh, Father's concubine, suffered from the disease for years and then died of it. But as I have described, whenever she ate at the same table with us, she always had her own separate crockery and chopsticks.

Over the centuries, Chinese people developed many customs related to death and funerals, quite apart from other special and more happy occasions. I remember some of these customs from around the time that Ah Jieh died in 1911. I was still quite young then, and although the religious ceremonies for funerals used to last a long time, the rituals and time-span varied from family to family. Usually, there would be special memorial services at the end of the first, third, fifth, and seventh weeks and sometimes at several specific intervals such as 100 days and a year hence. Often, a group of Buddhist monks or nuns would come to the home where the funeral was to take place—sometimes weeks or months afterwards—to recite prayers in several sessions each day and evening. On certain days, especially at the end of that series of prayers, paper artifacts representing clothing, money, and sometimes travel trunks, a house, and a sedan chair or rickshaw complete with attendants—all cleverly constructed in paper on a framework of split bamboo—would be burnt in a large portable incinerator. Thus the objects represented would be offered up to accompany the departed one into the next world.

For such a gathering it was necessary in those days to obtain police permission.

When Mamma died on January 5th, 1938, Lady Margaret was in charge and she carefully instructed Robbie's wife, Hesta, on the details of what needed to be done. She probably hoped that Hesta would know exactly what to do when she, Lady Margaret, passed away. Here I am speculating a little, but as fate would have it, both Robbie and Hesta were away when Lady Margaret died. Robbie was on duty with the Chinese Army during World War II, and Hester was with him. I had already been widowed and was working as an English secretary in Tangshan, north China, so that I could support my infant daughter, her amah, and myself. It was impossible for me even to contemplate going home for the funeral because of the war, particularly since there was absolutely no transport available, and I did not hear of her death until long afterwards.

Traditional Chinese custom has strict rules about the various degrees of mourning that each descendant or relative should exhibit, (or "wear" as the Chinese call it) and these strictures are clearly annotated in certain reference books. At an early stage of the funeral, those who are in charge of the ceremonies carefully consider the degree of mourning appropriate for each person. Sometimes this is indicated in the funeral announcement, sometimes not. In the announcement, it is often clearly stated that the children, sometimes mentioning them by name, are to be present at the deathbed and should personally attend to the last rites for the deceased. According to the customs our family followed, this would include clothing the deceased in funerary garb and placing two little beads, generally a pearl and a gold one, into the dead person's mouth. This was done so that in the next reincarnation, other people would listen to what he or she had to say; in other words, the person would be able to command respect and obedience.

If a child of the deceased was not able to be present when the parent died, the announcement would state the fact and add that he had "crawled home sorrowfully" in order to attend the funeral - whether or not they had actually gone through the ritual of "walking on the knees" all the way from the entrance of the house to where the body or coffin was laid out. Each of my two brothers had to do that. According to tradition, it was exceedingly unfilial for a child, especially a son, not to be present when the parent passed away. The heaviest mourning is for one's parents, though if a woman is married, her period of mourning is

reduced. This deepest grade of mourning is supposed to last for three years, though in actual practice it is normally reduced to 27 months. The sons and unmarried daughters would wear unbleached white funeral clothes with hemp, representing the deepest mourning. Sons and unmarried daughters would also use a white string to tie their hair. Nowadays, a rosette made with a little piece of white wool is often substituted. After some months, the mourning is reduced to a piece of dark blue hair string. Finally, when each person's appropriate mourning period is over, he or she is expected to go back to the funeral household and pay respects to the tablet where the soul of the deceased is said to be resting. Afterwards, he or she is given a piece of red hair string to remove the concept of mourning. The degree of mourning is also governed by the colour of clothing that the mourner is allowed to wear. Gold jewellery is not allowed to be worn, and indeed, in some strict families, the men are not allowed to shave before the funeral.

Sometimes the body (after being embalmed in modern times) would lie in state in the coffin, which would be carefully sealed if it was necessary to wait days or weeks for the principal mourners to return. Many Chinese prefer to be buried in their native village, thus in Hong Kong there were many "coffin houses" where they could be temporarily stored until they could be taken to their final resting place. Whenever a person pays his respects to the deceased, he is given a little packet with a coin wrapped in paper and a small piece of boiled sweet or wrapped candy. Before the funeral, the coin is wrapped in a piece of white, unbleached paper. At funerals in Hong Kong, mourners were generally given the money in a large Chinese envelope that had a strip of red down the centre of a white background. Those who attended the funeral were also given a white handkerchief, symbolic of wealth, because the word "white" is pronounced "baak" in Cantonese and sounds exactly like the word for "silk," which is synonymous with "wealth." Many of these customs, however, are fading out now or have been simplified to fit the modern way of life.

Because we were of mixed race, some of us had more Western features and racial characteristics than others. Daisy was one of those who looked more Western, because she had a fair complexion and brown hair that could be put into beautiful curls — if anyone had the patience to curl them for her. She also had features that could make her look as if she were smiling happily, as in a photo of six of us taken in 1907 when all of us but Robbie were lined up in sailor suits. On the other hand, in

another photo taken in 1908, Daisy had probably been told to keep her mouth closed in order to hide two large protruding teeth. Several of my other siblings—Eddie, Eva, Robbie, and Jean—also had curly hair. In yet another photo, taken in 1910 with all of us dressed in Chinese clothes, Daisy's hair is tidily arranged with a small tuft combed sideways and with her two big teeth in proper perspective, giving her a nice smile. That photo included Mary, our third sister, and Alexandra, the eldest daughter of Brother Wing, who was about nine months older than myself. However, Alexandra always called me Fifth Paternal Aunt. I especially like the photograph because it shows the future General Ho Shai-lai wearing two plaits on each side of his head. It was then the only way possible to keep his curly hair under control.

In photographs of our childhood days, Daisy is seen as an integral part of the family. One that I took was a shot of Mamma, Vic, Eva, and Robbie at Shanhaikuan. Another, which was not taken until more than half a century later, summarises what I have tried to say in describing our family. It was taken on the occasion of Father's 90th birthday on December 22, 1952, and there Daisy has the place of honour in the second row, standing immediately behind Father, though unfortunately his head hides part of her face. I remember Father had asked me to help plan the seating and standing positions in that photo, and I had tried to do my best. Those present were all immediate members of Father's family. We had the photo taken in the morning and had accidentally forgotten to ask Mary's husband, S.L. Wong, to join us. Eddie's two sons, Eric and Joe, were not able to get away from their studies in the United States to return to Hong Kong for the celebrations, although Father had written to all his scattered family to invite them to return for the occasion. Of course, he paid for their passages as well. All the mothers had died by then. Those present were the children, grandchildren, their spouses, and a few great-grandchildren.

For most of us, the highlight of our childhood days was our trip to Shanhaikuan during the summer of 1914. The previous year my parents had been traveling in north China with Victoria, Eddie, and Robbie. While she was there, Mamma heard about a large empty temple at Shanhaikuan. "Shan" means mountain, "hai" is ocean, and "kuan" means gate (where the mountain and the gate of the Great Wall meet the ocean). During the Chinese Revolution in late 1911 and early 1912, fighting that raged near the temple almost destroyed it. Buddhist statues

were thrown into the river, and the temple was left an empty shell, with no furnishings of any kind. Months before our arrival in 1914, Mamma had rented it and had it white-washed. She had decided to bring everything we might need, and the servants had long been putting big packing cases along the veranda on the ground floor of No 49, the Peak. Everything we would need for a long sojourn, including many dried foods and fruits packed inside foot-high malted milk bottles, was carefully wrapped in old newspapers and stowed by the amahs and by our "mother" in trunks and wooden chests and cases. Those amahs packed and packed for months.

Eventually we left on a coastal boat, the SS Cheong Sing. There were only two staterooms aboard the boat, and one had already been booked by someone else. We took the other plus a second-class room. The compradore gave up his own bedroom so we could use his, and the servants stayed in the third-class accommodation. Incidentally, a compradore is the member of an organisation or crew of a boat who is in charge of the Chinese staff and serves as the liaison between them and the management. The captain's name was Liddell, a kind man who took Jean and Robbie up to his cabin where he made hammock beds for them just outside his door. He also had a sofa where they could sleep if it was windy outside. We were a big group, comprising Mamma, Mrs Choa's elder daughter Minnie, our Chinese teacher Mr Chiu, a Chinese lady governess for Mamma, Miss Leung (Third Auntie), a male cook, and some female servants. Of the siblings, there were Victoria, Daisy, Eva, Robbie, Jean, Grace, and myself. Eddie could not come because he was in school at Queen's College. He had, however, planned to visit us during the summer along with Father. Grace, of course, was a baby, and Florence was not yet born. Somehow, we all managed to fit into this small boat, which stopped for fuel and cargo in Shanghai then went on to Weihaiwei, bound for Tientsin. I recall that just before the boat got to Weihaiwei, Robbie developed a fairly high fever. When the customs people came on board, they said: "You must stop the fever within 24 hours, otherwise we'll have to quarantine the boat." Mamma tried everything. She purged him, gave him sponge baths, and kept his diet mostly liquid. Within that 24-hour deadline, Mamma had successfully managed to bring the fever down. Tientsin was the end of the voyage, and we spent the night there.

Our parents had a good friend in Tientsin, Mr Y.H. Leung, an elderly man with whom they used to correspond. Once or twice a year,

Mamma would ask Mr Leung to buy some things in north China and have them packed and sent to us; in return, we would send items of interest to his large family. I remember that our collective baggage for this trip was enumerated on a long list, labelled according to the Chinese written on the boxes: Ho No 1, Ho No 2, and so on. There must have been a hundred pieces of luggage, and Mamma even brought along the piano because she wanted us to continue our music practice. We also packed an old dining table and several Chinese camp beds, which were basically two long poles fitted with wooden legs that crossed each other and a piece of canvas like a stretcher slip-cover, with hems along the sides for the poles to slip through. The canvas was permanently nailed down, and the beds could be folded tightly so that they took up little space. All our belongings were stored in a godown (warehouse) for several nights at Tientsin. On the morning we left, they were transferred to the train on which we travelled to the small settlement of Shanhaikuan. Once there we rode to the temple on a trolley car built by the British Army. There was a regiment stationed just beyond the temple. Built originally for Tin Hau (Goddess of the Sea), the temple still holds my interest when I visit China.

On my first return trip in 1981, via Tangshan, Chinwandao, Beidahe, and Shanhaikuan, our guide was a young fellow from the China Travel Service (CTS) who did not know anything about the temple. I asked an old man sitting by the roadside, but as he was from another district, he did not know either. However, while waiting for a train to leave Shanhaikuan, I chatted with the station-master. He was a native of the area and knew of the temple, although his impression was that it had been torn down and the site taken under military control. We both remembered the quiet little beach there, and I was delighted. On another visit the very next year, I asked the CTS to make inquiries and was told that, indeed, the temple had been demolished and soldiers were now stationed there. However, I was allowed to visit the site and immediately recognised the place with its prime view of the sea.

When we lived in the temple during 1914, we used to go every morning to a favourite vantage point and look out over the ocean. If the weather was bad, there would be whitecaps on the waves, but if the water was calm, we would have a morning swim before breakfast. When we were not swimming, we would go for donkey rides that got us quickly to the top of the Great Wall. By 1914, though, this section of the wall had been levelled so that it looked more like a wide road on the

mountain top. It was so flat and wide that we could even race our donkeys on it. Often we rode two to a donkey—except Mamma, who rode side-saddle on her own. The mafoos (donkey handlers) were both young and old, but all were very helpful, careful with their charges, and protective of the riders.

At that time Mamma was only 39, but we children thought she was quite old. Her circulation was so bad that immediately after she took off her swimming suit we had to rub her with Ellimann's Embrocation. Mamma had bottles and bottles of the stuff and the more I helped rub her, the more skillful and proficient I became in giving her a simple massage. Mamma would explain that one reason her arm hurt so much was that when her mother was dying, she would put her arm under the old lady's body to comfort her. She loved her mother so much that she held her continuously toward the end, so that she finally died in her arms.

In those days, Shanhaikuan had many flies and there were no screen doors in the old temple building. Our dining room was the main hall, and we ate breakfast there every day. The room was huge and it would have been expensive to put in screen doors, especially as we were only staying for a few months. To combat the flies, we used wooden-handled swishes with a lot of horse hair tied on the bottom. You can see these swishes today in the Chinese theatre, where a man or woman who personifies a hermit often holds one aloft. Sometimes we would have Chinese broth, at other times oatmeal or dry cereal such as cornflakes. We would eat semi-European style food or semi-Chinese breakfasts. After breakfast we all tidied up and then went to school. The temple had three or four levels on a slope, each with a central building on the north side. Two buildings faced the courtyard on each level, on the east and west sides. We entered from the south side because most temples are arranged like that. In the lowest level, which was used as a school room, we had several packing cases turned on their sides that served as desks. We continued our studies in Shanhaikuan, but only in half-day sessions, after which we would troop back to our rooms and tidy up before lunch. The midday meal would be followed by an afternoon nap.

Usually two of us shared one camp bed and lay with our heads at opposite ends. Although these were not our normal beds, we seemed to sleep all right. The air was the right temperature, and we had plenty of activity during the day. After our naps, we would have English lessons. Mamma's brother (Maternal Uncle), who joined us from north China,

used Robinson Crusoe as our textbook by reading parts of it and then explaining the story to us. Maternal Uncle had gone to north China some years before 1914, after his wife had died. His two daughters, Maggie and Lily, went to stay with their maternal grandparents, Uncle and Auntie Ho-Fook, while the two boys, Hong and Ning, stayed in our home. They also accompanied us to Shanhaikuan.

Eva and I were given additional duties inasmuch as we were told to teach Jean and Grace how to play the piano. Although I never became a good piano player, I gave Grace her first lessons. Eventually she became quite proficient at music, something that always amused me. Meanwhile, Eva taught Jean as much as she could. Sometimes Mamma would want to write a letter to Father, but she seldom had to write it herself. She would either get Miss Leung (Third Auntie) to compose a letter in Chinese, or she would use the opportunity to give me some English dictation. Mamma did not have perfect grammar, but she could speak English quite fluently and make herself understood. She dictated to me, and I would write it down and then show it to Vic, who would correct it. After that, I would then copy it and send it back to Father. It was good English practice for me, and Mamma got some of her correspondence done in this way.

A junior local official in Shanhaikuan had evidently been asked by someone to look after us during our stay, which he kindly did. He often sent two tidily-uniformed mounted police around on their lovely big horses. The servant would come in and announce: "Bureau Chief Woo has sent two men, Madam, to see if you have any messages for him." Mamma would send an appropriate reply: "Thank you very much, there is nothing we need," or "I would like to have this or that arrangement made."

In the afternoons, when the weather was good, we might go for a picnic or a long donkey ride. One of the local sights was the grave of a girl called Meng Jiang Nu. The story goes that long ago her husband had been conscripted to help build the Great Wall, a common practice in those days. She waited and pined for his return, but he failed to show up. Meng Jiang Nu was so disappointed that she undertook the arduous trip to Shanhaikuan to try and find him. Somehow, amongst the thousands of workers engaged on the wall construction, she managed to find someone who knew her husband, but the person was the bearer of bad news. He told her simply: "I'm sorry, but here he died and it is here his bones are buried." According to legend, the distraught young widow



wept and wept right there against the Great Wall, and it collapsed. There is another version of the story that says Meng Jiang Nu committed suicide and was buried there beside her husband. Today, a big rock shaped like a half eggshell marks the spot. The rock has three big Chinese characters carved on it that mean "Looking for Husband Stone" ("Wang Fu Shih" in Mandarin). There is also a little temple dedicated to her memory, and the story has been written up in some little booklet for the benefit of tourists to the region. In my travels to Shanhaikuan in 1982, I saw these sights. There you could see the gates, the real gates, at the end of the Great Wall. Above them is a shrine with five characters meaning "At the First Gate Under Heaven" ("Tien Hsia Di Yi Kuan"—also in Mandarin).

## FOUR

# Diocesan Girls' School

**S**ome of my most cherished childhood memories relate to my schooldays. Looking back, I realise how fortunate I was to be sent initially to Diocesan Girls' School (DGS), whose founders originally attempted to provide some education for children of mixed parentage. Previously the Diocesan School and Orphanage for Boys had been established, and DGS became its sister school. After it had been decided that we younger girls were to go to DGS, Mamma visited our uncle, Mr Wong Kam-fook, to discuss the travel arrangements. Uncle Wong had married the seventh younger sister of my father, so we called him Tsat Goo Jeung, meaning "husband of seventh paternal aunt." His home was in Kowloon, near the Star Ferry pier. Since he had access to a friend's car, he told Mamma that he could easily arrange for the chauffeur to collect us at the pier every morning and drive us to DGS, which was about a mile away. The chauffeur was duly instructed and thereafter took us to and from school six days a week.

The first thing we had to do when we arrived at the school was to take a placement test. I did not feel too confident about this, as I had forgotten much of my previous school work because of the long summer holidays. Based on the results of the test, we were all assigned to different classes. Eva, age 11, was placed in Class Four; I was one year younger and assigned to Class Five; while Robbie, who was then 8 years old, joined Class Seven. Daisy, being a problem child, received special treatment. Mamma arranged for her to become a boarder because she believed that in this way the school might be better able to help her. She was then 14 and enrolled in Class Six.

Class One, of course, was the highest in the school. In those days

DGS was not a very big establishment, so Classes One to Five were called the Upper School and classes Six, Seven, and Eight (which was subdivided into an Upper Eight, Middle Eight, and Lower Eight) were the Lower School. Altogether there were ten classes in the whole complex, and these normally took students a decade to complete. Some classes at DGS were quite small; for instance, the top class had only four students. Classes One to Five all had their desks arranged in separate rows in what we called the "big school room." Class One was nearest the left-hand side as we sat down facing the teacher and Class Five, where I was a student, was at the far right-hand side of the hall. We all went to our desks for roll call, which would be conducted by either Miss Skipton, our headmistress; Miss Ferguson, second mistress; or Miss Bascombe, one of the teachers. They just called the Christian or "given" names of the girls, not the surnames, as they checked attendance.

On Saturdays, school finished early at around 11:30 am, and we would often ask our chauffeur to take us for a short drive out towards the Jubilee Reservoir. In those days, there were many monkeys living in the pine trees along the roadside, and we used to enjoy feeding them with peanuts they would take from our hands. During my first few weeks at school, I felt quite lost. I was only age 10, of course, and this was the first time in my life I had ever been away from home for a whole day. Having no previous experience of going to school, I just followed what my classmates did. I remember vividly a Eurasian girl named Mary Anderson who was especially kind to me. Unfortunately, Mary fell ill and died before we finished our schooling. Needless to say, I was extremely sad about it.

The next year, on June 3, 1915, Father was knighted by King George V. I never knew that Father had an English name until it was announced in the newspapers that he had become Sir Robert Ho Tung. I believe he was only the second Chinese or Eurasian from Hong Kong to receive that honour. Of course, some of the girls at school were quite mean and used to tease me about Father's new status. They made a joke about the word "sir," which sounds like a Chinese word meaning "sliding." They also teased Daisy about her being mentally handicapped. At lunch we were assigned seats and I was told to sit at the same long table as Daisy. Some of the other girls did not understand why a big girl like Daisy was in Class Six, so they would tease her unmercifully, a situation that hurt me very much. Daisy looked perfectly normal when she was not upset or irritated and had a pretty face, especially when she

smiled.

Mamma knew of DGS only as a good school for teaching English, and that is why she sent us there, inspite of its being partly or mainly the intention of the founders to provide a good Christian education and orphanage for children of mixed parentage. I suppose the founders thought that many of these children would eventually go to England, and the curriculum was designed to meet their needs. When we enrolled in 1914 there were only two Chinese staff members who instructed the lower classes. One, Miss Poon from Australia, taught us needlework while the other, Miss Allen, gave us 30 minutes of dictation each week and spent most of her time teaching the little ones. The other staff were mostly English teachers recruited from the United Kingdom. In 1914 the school was probably not as generously funded as it and many other local establishments would be in later years. Consequently the headmistress at DGS must have had a very tight budget, which explains why she had little or no clerical assistance.

As ours was a Christian school, the first lesson preceding all classes was a half hour of learning the Scriptures, with each class generally studying one or more books of the Bible thoroughly. I remember in Class Five we read the Book of Joshua. For this lesson, all classes but two—which used the far sides of the big schoolroom and had separate blackboards—moved to other rooms in the building. Our large assembly hall was partitioned into three sections: the home room with five classes at one end; the dining room, which was also used for singing and other lessons of the Upper School, at the other end; and a middle classroom in the centre. These were all separated from each other by movable wooden partitions.

Besides the Scriptures, we had lessons in the various branches of English literature, composition, grammar, and dictation. For mathematics, at first we were taught only arithmetic because in those days the Senior Local Examination was the highest test then open to girls. As it was not necessary for girls to learn all branches of mathematics, Miss Skipton felt that we did not need to study advanced maths. Towards the end of my first term, Miss Bascombe arrived and persuaded Miss Skipton to let the girls learn algebra. However, since she did not feel there was enough time in our course schedule—or perhaps because of Miss Bascombe's teaching load—for us to learn geometry as well, we skipped that subject. We also had history, geography, nature studies, hygiene, domestic science, singing (with several classes combined in the

dining room), drill in the playground, and needlework. For the latter, the whole Upper School would be supervised by one teacher. We learned English history and geography, plus a little about world geography, but we mainly concentrated on the British Empire. I remember in Class Five we studied English history from 1066, beginning with the Norman Conquest, and for geography we studied British South Africa—which, at the time, struck me as being rather odd.

Because the school was short of staff, we had the Rev N.C. Pope, pastor of St Andrew's Church, teach the Scripture lesson every morning when we reached the top class. A Greek and Latin scholar, he made the books of St John and the Acts of the Apostles quite interesting. Sometimes the pastor got frustrated when we did not meet his standards. We were all quite sad when he developed peritonitis and died. His widow afterwards joined the school as Matron, bringing her three young children with her.

Most of the curriculum at DGS was based on what English children would learn "back home." For instance, in geography I remember learning the names of English rivers such as the Tyne, Tees, Ware, the Yorkshire, Ouse, and so on. We also learned the genealogies of English kings since the Norman Conquest. English history was studied thoroughly, year after year—although later, in the highest classes, we also had a little European history—while geography dealt with various parts of the British Empire. Fortunately, when we were in Class Two, Miss Ferguson taught us the geography of Asia, including China, a subject in which I was keenly interested. I particularly remember learning that China had rich mineral resources that had not yet been developed and that the Middle Kingdom had only a tiny rail system despite the vast areas that desperately needed to be opened up. This partly laid the foundation for my respect and admiration of the present Chinese government for attending to these urgent needs.

Our school routine was not confined to the classroom, of course, since even our return journey each day was part of the experience. We were expected to be on our best behaviour at all times, and I recall one incident that happened during our daily travels. It was the one time when Father took part in disciplining any of us. This concerned my brother Robbie, who was about 9 years old. In those days there was no motor road to the Peak, so the only way to get up or down quickly was by the Peak tram. Seating in the vehicle was arranged in three sections. When the train was climbing the hill, one first-class section was immediately

behind the driver, who stood at the controls at the front end of the tram. Another first-class compartment was situated in the middle of the carriage where the seating was configured differently, while at the back were a few rows of benches mainly for third-class passengers, where our chair coolies sat. When the tram was going downhill, the driver would remain at his post and merely turn round to face the rear end of the tram. The passenger seating arrangements remained the same, and we children normally travelled in the middle compartment.

One day Robbie was as usual sitting with some of our chair coolies at the back of the tram. In addition to the tram driver, there was always a Chinese ticket collector on board, equipped with a ticket rack and punch. Passengers could either buy their tickets for the trip *en route* or utilise a 20-journey card issued by the tram company and punched by the conductor for each single trip. There was also a European inspector whose duty it was to check both trams that plied up and down the Peak to see that the tickets had been properly issued and punched or, indeed, to make sure that each passenger possessed a valid ticket. This inspector would invariably travel part of the way on one tram, then get off and catch the other vehicle going the opposite way. As they still do today, the trams shared a single cable and counterbalanced each other, with one travelling up as the other took the reverse journey down. On the fateful day, when the inspector came around and asked our chair coolies to produce their tickets, Robbie, who was in a naughty mood anyway, told them each in Chinese: "Don't show it, don't show it to him." The servants were torn between loyalty to their young master and the tram official who, after all, was just trying to do his job. The inspector was quite angry and explained that he was only doing his duty, until eventually the coolies showed him their tickets.

As luck, or fate, would have it, Father rode the tram later in the week. Actually it was unusual for him to venture forth from the Peak except to attend board meetings of the many companies for which he was a director. Among these was the Peak Tram Company. When the inspector came upon Father sitting in the middle of the tram, he quickly seized the opportunity to complain about Robbie's behaviour. A couple of days later, Father sent for all of us to go down to his Peak house at No 83. When we were all assembled in the sitting room, he emerged from his bedroom via the long veranda. He was wearing dark glasses and slowly walked over to sit on a chair placed specially in a position to command the room. It was a solemn moment. "Today I have something

unpleasant to do. When I was travelling on the Peak tram, the inspector complained to me, saying that my son had been rude to him," he said. Then he called Robbie over to stand in front of him and put out his hand. Father administered three quick strokes on the outstretched hand from a short bamboo he had been holding. Robbie did not flinch from the whacking except to simply drop his hand and apologise to Father. It was quite a ceremony, and we had all been told to witness it, presumably as an example of how not to behave in public. But the drama was not entirely over. Father told Eddie to escort Robbie to the Peak tram station, find the inspector, and apologise to him. That was the part Robbie disliked most. I remember when he went out to the rear of the house via the pantry, the servants asked him if his hand hurt. Robbie replied: "Oh no, he only just scratched the skin." Anyway, we often laughed about this incident, which I am sure Robbie still remembers. It was the one and only time that I knew of Father having to chastise any of us.

When we graduated from DGS at the end of December 1918, I was aged 14 and Eva was just 15 months older, so we were obviously too young to discontinue our studies altogether. About two years earlier, on a visit to Father at No 83, he had casually, perhaps half-jokingly, said: "You don't need to go back to school any more. You are already in Class Two. I left school when I was in the same class and have not done too badly since. You might learn more if you come to work in my office." We were horrified and tried to explain that times had changed considerably, and it was necessary for us to have more education than was needed in his young days. Thank goodness, it was never mentioned again.

At the end of our Class Three school year we took the Oxford Preliminary Examination. DGS used to prepare us girls for that exam every year and ours was the last, because World War I had broken out in 1914. In the summer of 1916 Oxford sent out their question papers by sea, and we sat the exams. Our answers were of course returned to England by sea mail. Fortunately, our answer papers arrived safely. However, the boat carrying our results back to Hong Kong was torpedoed, so we had to wait quite a few months before we found out how we had done. One morning when Eva and I were travelling on the Peak tram, a gentleman passenger, who turned out to be the Director of Education, came over to us and asked if we both went to Diocesan Girls' School. Mystified, we told him we did. Actually, since there were no other Chinese girls travelling daily on the tram, we were probably quite

conspicuous. We were delighted when he said: "Will you please take this package back to Miss Skipton, your headmistress? You two have done very well." It turned out that both of us had achieved Third Class Honours, but we did not learn about this until some time after we had been back at school. Anyway we were quite pleased, and even more so when Eva was awarded the Sir Frederick Lugard Scholarship that very year.

In Class Two we sat for the Junior Local Examination of The University of Hong Kong, and in Class One we took the Senior Local Examination. By that time, Miss Bascombe had instilled in us an appreciation and a good understanding of mathematics. She invariably studied The University of Hong Kong syllabus and kept urging us: "If you ever want to get into university, you will need mathematics, and that means both algebra and geometry." Since the school did not have the capacity to teach geometry as a regular subject, we counted ourselves lucky that Miss Bascombe—who was helping a senior student, Anna Braun, in geometry—encouraged us to attend her coaching classes. Anna had been in the top class, Class One, and had already passed the Senior Local Exam, with the hope that she would be allowed to take the full maths exam at a later date. Although we joined the coaching class quite a few weeks after Anna, Miss Bascombe quickly taught us the fundamentals and also encouraged us to read the early lessons in the textbook for ourselves so that we could catch up.

Some weeks later, after much hard study, Miss Skipton, the headmistress, told us that Miss Bascombe no longer had the time to coach us. This was a bombshell, but the hard-pressed maths teacher was still encouraging. "I'm sorry I can't teach you. However, you can still study the book yourselves and answer the questions at the end of each chapter. When you finish each section, bring the answers to me and I will correct them," she said. And that is how we managed to continue. Soon, we had finished the syllabus in geometry for the Senior Local Examination. Miss Bascombe, who had studied the university syllabus, then put us on the right path again. "Trigonometry requires very little work; you can do that easily," she told us, allaying our reluctance to embark upon the subject. At first we were sceptical, but she encouraged us, and we eventually completed trigonometry as well. She even got us to study for a subject called "higher algebra and higher plane trigonometry." I found that I could also pass in that subject and was delighted.



The University of Hong Kong had changed its annual examinations from summer to winter, so we spent a total of three half-year terms in the top class of D.G.S., which enabled us to study some extra maths. Often in the mathematics class, Miss Bascombe would say: "You two can amuse yourselves," meaning that we could get out our maths books and study them by ourselves, since she was teaching the class what we already knew. She was a brilliant teacher, capable but strict. She kept a little red book in which she would record the names of all the girls who had not completed their assignments, such as homework or corrections to their homework. If we did not give her all the work we needed to do, she would make us stay in school on Saturday beyond the normal 11:30 am ending time to finish it.

Although she was an energetic woman, Miss Bascombe actually had one stiff leg. We heard that this was due to a childhood injury and that the leg had been left in a plaster cast so long that the muscles had atrophied beyond repair. Despite that, she could do almost anything. She could play tennis, swim, or go on hikes, often accompanied by some of us girls. Once, before the territory became as overcrowded as it is today, Miss Bascombe took a group of boarders up to nearby King's Park for a walk and some sketching. It was a Sunday afternoon, but on the way home the group was caught in a sudden fog. In those days King's Park was so full of trees that the teacher and her charges lost their way and could not return to school. They had no compass because they had not expected to get lost, so when it eventually became completely dark, they gave up trying to find their way home. Miss Bascombe sat up all night and let the girls lie down and rest their heads against her extended legs while she kept vigil. When they finally arrived home early the next morning, Miss Bascombe was roundly scolded by Miss Skipton, who immediately sent all the girls to bed.

Miss Skipton was not a cloistered missionary, but she lived like one and had never married. She had a BA from London University and was already fairly elderly when we girls were at DGS because she retired soon after we left school. She was a dedicated headmistress who looked every inch the part, being tall and thin with drawn-back grey hair. Because there was little in the way of clerical assistance in those days, she would work hard in her office every night, catching up with all the paperwork. Even after she finished, her day was not complete, for she would then take a lantern on a round of all the dormitories, just to make sure that none of the girls had kicked off her blanket. If she

found anyone uncovered, Miss Skipton would gently replace the blanket.

One of our classmates, a girl named Maria, was an orphan whose father had been German, and Miss Skipton had assumed her guardianship. Maria was an intelligent, clever girl, and while she was in Lower School, she hardly had to study at all. She always knew her work and could answer questions without hesitation. But as she went higher in school, she did have to work much harder. I remember one day when she had been naughty, Miss Skipton sent her out of the room and then gave the rest of us girls a little lecture. "Maria is very unfortunate; she doesn't have her own parents and is an orphan," she said. "You, as her classmates, ought to be kind to her and try to help her." Thereafter, we all tried hard to help Maria. She became like a mascot to the rest of us, and although we still teased her, we all loved her very much.

Because we were at school during the war years, each of us had to sew a flannelette shirt for the soldiers. The material had already been cut out, and we had to recognise the parts and assemble them into a complete garment. The needlework teacher taught us what went where, with the collar, the cuffs, and so on. We each had to make a shirt and knit at least one pair of socks for the soldiers. Sometimes, when Miss Skipton would come in to supervise our sewing lessons, she would just sit there while we did our knitting. The girls, of course, would chatter away, as small-talk was allowed. However, if we went too far, she would quickly say: "When you are chatting, your tongues go quicker and quicker and your fingers go slower and slower, so that you complete just one stitch instead of two and make one sock instead of a pair. So think of the poor soldier waiting over there in France, waiting for his other sock." That little lecture impressed us to the point where we did not often waste time.

After we had been at school for a year or two, it was time for Jean and Grace to begin their own learning process. Miss Skipton tried to persuade Mamma to let them attend DGS because all our family had been there. However, Mamma was not too keen on the idea and told Miss Skipton: "You only teach English at your school, and unless you get a teacher to teach them Chinese, I'm going to send them somewhere else." She even thought of sending Jean and Grace to St Stephen's. Miss Skipton finally capitulated and agreed to find a suitable teacher—but, unfortunately, the one she hired just was not good enough. He simply

could not impart knowledge, thus we did not learn much from him. He used to teach us Chinese from four to five o'clock. Since Jean and Grace were still quite young, that made it too long a day for them, because they would have other homework to do as well. After Eva and I left school, Jean and Grace took Chinese classes instead of needlework. They did not do well in the language, though; their Chinese was weak, so the teacher could give them only an "average" grade. Afterwards, they remarked that if they had taken needlework instead, they might have earned better marks.

In our final year at DGS, when we were in Class One, one of the subjects offered for the Hong Kong University Senior Local Exam was physiology and hygiene. We enjoyed these topics mainly because we had such a good textbook. At that time one of Eddie's friends, Dr. G.H. Thomas, was busily courting my eldest sister Victoria. When he found out that we were interested in physiology, he offered to take the whole class to the mortuary—if our teacher would agree. He was definitely quite serious about the idea. "I will conduct a post mortem examination on a baby girl, which will mean cutting up the corpse and showing it to you people. Then you'll know the different organs and have a better idea of where they are located and what they look like," he told us with an offhand clinical air. I thought this was a good idea, so Eva and I told Miss Bascombe, who also taught physiology. She used to show us various organs for these lessons; she would bring out a bull's eye, or maybe a pig's lungs. At times she would dissect the eye to help us identify the crystalline lens, or she might blow up the pig's lungs with a pair of bellows from the kitchen. On occasion she would produce a cow's heart and cut it open to show us the valves leading to the ventricle and oracle, or to the lungs. One day she brought a brain, outlining all the grey and white matter, the convolutions, and the medulla oblongata (rear part of the brain leading to the spinal cord). Under her tutelage we also learnt by heart the names of all the bones in the human body.

Naturally, Miss Bascombe was delighted by Dr Thomas's offer to let us attend a post mortem examination—which we subsequently did, even though Miss Skipton was skeptical about allowing our classmate, Maria, to come with us. As Maria's guardian, she felt that the girl was not yet mature enough. At that time Maria and I were both around 14 years old, in fact she was a couple of months older. But as Miss Skipton was a bit old-fashioned, she was afraid that if Maria witnessed the dissection and was shown the ovaries and uterus "it might put ideas into

her head." So Miss Skipton refused permission for Maria to go along with us. Maria was furious and tried to argue her case. "Irene Ho Tung is younger than I am; if she can go, why can't I?" she pleaded. Miss Skipton would not be moved and replied: "Well, Irene has her mother to be responsible for her, and I am responsible for you. I won't allow it and you've just got to accept my word." It took Maria a long, long time to get over that frustration. Later, she told us that on the day, Miss Skipton had arranged for her to "go and play with real children (Mrs Pope's), including a 'live' baby girl."

There were other interesting and memorable incidents in our life at DGS, but all too soon it was 1918 and we were in the top class. That final year we did very well, with both Eva and I passing in many subjects of the university's "senior level" examinations. Naturally, we had made many friends at DGS, some of them lifelong. In our class we had two Portuguese, two Indian, one Danish, several English, and of course many Chinese and Eurasian girls as well, and we all lived happily together in a truly international atmosphere. We did not talk much about our backgrounds; we were just classmates, schoolmates, and good friends. The two Portuguese girls were special pals of Eva and mine, and we kept in touch for many years. Miss Bascombe, who also kept up correspondence with me, left Hong Kong but later returned to become headmistress of Bellilios Public School, the only government secondary school for girls at that time. During World War II, she went to take up a post in the Middle East but became sick and returned to England. I wrote to her during her long illness and later learned from her brother that she had passed away. I donated a maths prize to DGS in memory of her for many years. We saw Miss Skipton again in England when I went there in 1927. She lived in the borough of Ealing and taught us how to use the bus map and pocket atlas of London. She was really like a mother figure to all the girls—and of course especially to Maria, who also contacted her guardian when she travelled to the UK. Another teacher, Miss Allen, who used to give us dictation lessons, retired to England and lived quite near my artist niece, Wendy.

During the summer of 1917 we spent our holidays at the beautiful port of Tsingtao, which I visited five times between 1917 and 1978. Tsingtao, one of China's many interesting and historical cities, had been occupied by Germany in the 18th century and turned into a German colony. The immigrant population built many houses, the red roofs of which, when

juxtaposed with those of other hues, were extremely pretty. Among the larger buildings that they erected over the years was a good hospital called the Faber Krankenhaus, which the Chinese called the Foo Pah Yi Yuan. The hospital had an excellent superintendent, Dr Weischer, who was originally a gynecologist and obstetrician but could treat practically any disease. He was widely respected and loved by the people he served. His wife was a capable and clever woman who spoke fairly good English, so we could always understand what she told us, much of which was exceedingly interesting. Vic, Grace, and I—but especially Grace—maintained a lifelong friendship with her. During World War I, Japan attacked Tsingtao and wrested control of the city from the Germans. They interned Dr Weischer, but his wife appealed through the International Red Cross on the basis that "doctors should not be made prisoners of war." Response was not immediate, but after many negotiations and much agitation, this determined woman managed to get her husband released. My parents had known the couple very well in 1915 because it was Dr Weischer who had delivered my youngest sister, Florence, in August that year.

In 1917, when Florence was almost two years old, Mamma took us back to Tsingtao because the weather there in summer was so much better than in Hong Kong. At that time, although World War I had not yet ended and Tsingtao remained under Japanese administration, we were still able to go there. This may have been because we travelled on British passports from Hong Kong. Anyway, it was evidently quite safe to do so, and thus Eddie came along with us too. In fact almost everyone except Father gathered in Tsingtao for the family holiday. I remember Florence's older amah, Yee P'aw, saying to Mamma: "Lady, eggs are so cheap here in Tsingtao; the baby loves eggs so much, why don't you give her two a day? Please give her more eggs." As it turned out, by then Florence had changed her mind and would not eat eggs at all!

Mamma rented a house for us all to stay in, and every afternoon we went swimming. I believe that the huge beach at Tsingtao is one of the best in the world; the sand is so nice, not too fine and not too rough. There were no barnacles, nothing to hurt our feet, and the sea was generally calm. Besides swimming, which we had almost mastered, we also tried to ride bicycles, as there were plenty for hire near the beach. Unfortunately, there was nobody there to teach us to ride, so we tried to do it on our own but with no success whatsoever. I know I kept falling and got my legs all black and blue. I never learned properly until many

decades later, when circumstances and determination forced me to use a bike to go to work in Tientsin and Tangshan.

We sometimes went into the countryside by rickshaw. The men who pulled the rickshaws were all from Shantung province. They were very tall and husky, a strong breed with good physiques, which they claimed was due to a diet that included lots of leeks and garlic. I recall that it was most unpleasant to sit in the rickshaw behind a puller who had eaten either leeks or garlic. He would continuously exhale an obnoxious, nauseating smell, a state of affairs that might last for several days after he had eaten the offending vegetables. We also sometimes went to the poorer parts of the city or countryside. I hesitate to describe some of the activities we saw that seemed disgusting to us strangers from Hong Kong, who were not used to seeing such things. In summer, we saw lots of little children, especially boys, wearing only brief loin clothes or even just a patch of cloth over their stomachs. Sometimes the boys wore trousers with flaps at the back, so that when they wanted to move their bowels they could just squat down wherever they chose. As for urination, even the rickshaw puller would simply set down the handles of the rickshaw and relieve himself at the street corner.

Such were the terrible public health conditions that prevailed. This did not just apply to the rural areas of Shantung province in 1917, but also to the small streets or "hu-tungs" in the old capital then known as Peking in 1926, where I stayed for many months. In 1917 many young girls in the countryside still had their feet bound, an ancient Chinese practice that was thought to make them more beautiful and attractive to prospective suitors. Despite their handicap, many of the older ladies who had bound feet could hobble around fairly actively. However, in the main foot binding was excruciating, immobilising, and thoroughly unnecessary.

Our 1917 Tsingtao sojourn was our second big trip to China during our formative, adolescent years and provided us with strong impressions upon which to reflect fondly in later years. Two years later in 1919, after the end of the so-called Great War, at the Treaty of Versailles the Allies wanted to give Tsingtao to the Japanese because Japan had joined the war on their side. However, the Chinese had also joined the Allies and had sent thousands of labourers to France. They cleared the battlefields and did much of the dirty work. When the students in Beijing heard about the Allied proposal for the future of Tsingtao, they vehemently protested. Through the newspapers and by

direct telegrams, they urged student organisations in the universities, colleges, and secondary schools throughout China to join in a protest strike. They pointed out that it was some of the pro-Japanese politicians who were behind the moves and even forced one of them to resign after exposing him. The treaty finally restored Tsingtao to the jurisdiction of China, following what was probably the first successful student strike in the world. In 1972, when I revisited Nanjing, my good friend Dr Wu Yi-fang, formerly president of the Ginling College for Women, told me that she had been one of the activists in this historic episode.

It was in 1919 that Mamma decided to send Florence to DGS. She was the youngest of us children and was only 4 at the time, but this was balanced by the fact that Jean and Grace were still at the school. However, because she was still so young, Mamma thought it might be better if Florence stayed at school as a boarder, so that there would be no rush to get her off in the mornings to school. As it turned out, the arrangement made the little girl very unhappy. Each child had a "school mother," and Florence's was a cousin of ours, Pansy Wong. Every day, when it was time for the older children to leave school for home, Pansy would try to divert Florence's attention. However, later she would discover that the others had gone home and would weep uncontrollably. Eventually, Florence asked Mamma to let her come back home. Mamma told her: "Since you are Father's daughter, you had better ask Father." Therefore, the very next time she saw Father, Florence screwed up all her courage and burst out crying: "I don't want to be a boarder." Whereupon Father, quite surprised at this outburst, quietened her down. When he realised what her problem was and exactly what she was trying to say, he said to her: "My darling, if you don't want to be a boarder, you don't have to be a boarder." Naturally, Mamma accepted Father's decision and allowed Florence to become a day scholar.

Florence was a sensitive and nervous child by nature and there were several incidents in her early life that added to her problems. When she was a young baby, Mamma was quite busy with Father's health problems and other things that were happening at the time. To make sure Florence was well taken care of, Mamma arranged for her to have two amahs. Unfortunately, the affection and attention of these two servants could not make up for the denial she felt at not having the personal care and protection of her mother. Attitudes towards child care

have changed over the years, of course, and it was not until many decades later that I learned about the "deprived child" syndrome that can affect children at an early age.

I believe Florence was affected more seriously by a prank played on her at an early age, a joke that backfired in a cruel way. When she was a very small child someone —it might have been Eva— told her that she was "not one of us," but that her mother was really a poor woman from Shantung province where she had been born, and that Mamma had just adopted her. It is the sort of thing that older people sometimes tell kids in jest and think little more about it. In Florence's case it had serious ramifications because she believed this story fervently, and it helped to develop in her a severe inferiority complex. Before I left for England at the end of 1926, I deliberately took pains to explain the true situation to her and hoped that it would set her mind at rest. She was then 11 years old, and I felt thankful that on this occasion she seemed to have understood the true situation and believed me.

However, she must have still harboured doubts that played on her mind because one day many years later—in 1930 or 1931—when she was with me at Lingnan University, she again posed the question: "Am I *really* Mamma's daughter?" I replied: "Of course you are; didn't I explain this to you before I left for England?" She then told me that she thought I had been merely trying to comfort her. "If I am really your sister why am I so ugly and you are all so pretty?" she said. At the time she was suffering from adolescent acne and thought it would never go away. She also observed that: "You all are so clever and I am so stupid." This was her inferiority complex showing through; she had no self-confidence, and her inability to understand maths bothered her greatly. When Florence went to Diocesan Girls' School as a day scholar, she would often come to me after school with tears in her eyes, saying: "I can't do my sums." I would sit her down quietly with her books open and encourage her to try to do them by herself. Sometimes, I would explain one or two points that she did not understand. In the supportive atmosphere of the home she could do the maths perfectly. However, the very next morning when her arithmetic teacher came into the classroom and said loudly, "Florence Ho Tung, where are your sums?" she would crumple under the intimidation. All Florence's thoughts and knowledge of arithmetic would then fly out of her head, so she grew up with the misconception that she could never do mathematics. This feeling stayed with her until many years later when she was with me at



Lingnan University. There I had a tutor who patiently helped her through the mathematics syllabus. She finally passed the maths requirement for the entrance exam to Lingnan University with flying colours. Florence finally overcame the terrible stumbling block that had haunted her for so long.

Years later, when I studied psychology and its many applications, my understanding of various members of my own family and their problems helped give me an insight into the application of theory into the lives of other human beings. In Florence's case, her husband and I, as well as many other members of our family, tried to reassure her that although she had handicaps to start with, she later proved to be exceedingly capable throughout the rest of her life. This was especially so when her husband eventually became the Director of Medical and Health Services, and she performed her duties admirably. When my daughter went to Cambridge in 1958 to study at Girton College, I asked Florence and her husband, K.C., to serve as guardians for her. I am happy that they established such an excellent parent-child relationship between them. So in various ways, Florence and I developed a close bond with one another, and I am thankful that her husband joined in wholeheartedly. I really feel that he is like a brother to me. In fact, he is the only surviving brother-in-law in my own family, although I have had eight altogether. On my husband's side, I still had one, George Chen, who also was most helpful. Sadly, he too has now passed away.

During the years 1915-18, Vic had grown into a beautiful, attractive young lady who naturally had many admirers. Though in those days we had very little social life, it was very much an open secret that Dr Thomas was madly in love with her. He visited us as often as he could, especially when Mamma was away seeing the many temples along the Yangtse river. Dr Thomas was a good friend of my brother Eddie, and they were both in the Police Reserve together. Eddie looked up to Dr Thomas, who was like an elder brother or uncle to him. On the other hand, Mamma had already taken a liking to M.K. Lo, even before he and his brother and several of our cousins went to England for their studies. M.K.'s parents were also Eddie's godparents, so the mother and Mamma "arranged the match" with Vic's dutiful consent.

One of my recollections of that summer in 1916 was the disastrous fire at the Happy Valley race course. At the time, the spectators' stands were matsheds, with big ones and small ones all built of bamboo and thatch. The mother of my future brother-in-law, M.K.

Lo, was actually caught in the terrible fire that raged through the stands and killed hundreds of people, mainly Chinese. She was one of the fortunate ones and managed to escape. Eddie, as a member of the Police Reserve, had much work to do that day helping to rescue people and comfort others who had lost their loved ones in the catastrophe.

Also at that time, Eva and I started to learn how to drive a motor car. I know I had not really learned to drive properly yet, so it must have been a couple of years later that Eddie arranged for one of his police officer friends to come to our home and give Eva a test. Afterwards the policeman turned to me and said: "She knows how to drive quite well. How about you?" Embarrassed, I said I was not sure that I was yet ready to take my test. He pressed me to take the car for a spin to see what I could do. Reluctantly I drove it around the roads near our house for a short while. To my surprise, he passed me for a driving licence but cautioned me to take it slowly, saying: "I think you know the rules, you just need more practice." In some ways that was my downfall, because I became lazy and did not practice any more, although at the best of times it was never easy to borrow Father's chauffeur and car to teach us. After the war, I had to learn how to drive all over again before I felt any degree of confidence to venture out in charge of a vehicle on my own.

By 1917, when Mamma had come home from her travels, she and M.K. Lo's mother began planning for his wedding to Victoria. Of course, they disapproved of Dr Thomas coming to court Vic, but we enjoyed the mini-drama very much. When Mamma was away, he used to visit Vic at weekends, and after dinner we would all go outside and sit under the stars. At other times we would telephone Dr Thomas on Vic's behalf and then put them together on the line so that they could have a private chat. However, after Mamma's return, the two mothers arranged the marriage between Vic and M.K. Lo, but later Mamma told us that because Vic was very shy, she had pretended she knew nothing about the forthcoming betrothal, and we had believed her.

One day Mamma casually said to us during one of our many hill walks on the road linking the two houses: "Now that Victoria is getting married, either Eva or you, Irene, must help me do my accounts." When we got back to the house Eva told me to do it because she did not relish the task. As usual, I got the job by default. Anything Eva wanted to get out of, she did, because she always had the last word. It was not an easy job to keep Mamma's household accounts, but we were given some extra help by Leung Yee-goo (Second Auntie Leung). She was a literate,

educated girl from the country and kept some of the petty cash accounts for Mamma. The cook kept another account book and wrote down in it all he had spent on our food and the servants' food. He had a budget, of course, but for special occasions, such as festivals, he would come to us and ask for an extra \$10 or \$20, amounts he would dutifully record in his accounts book which he always kept. The value of money then was quite different from what it is now.

The Hok Lo chair and rickshaw coolies were of different "stock" from our other servants and came from areas to the north and west of the territory, such as Hok Shan. Indeed, they were much stronger in physique and preferred to cater and cook for themselves, so their salaries were on a different scale. Most had come straight from the countryside at Shun Tak, near Guangzhou, the provincial capital slightly up the river on the south coast of mainland China.

When Mamma needed some money for expenses she would tell me to charge it to her own account. From time to time, therefore, I would write out a money order for her to sign so that cash could be drawn directly from her account at Father's office, Sang Kee, where most of our family business was conducted. Similarly, each of us siblings also had our personal accounts with which we could spend, or save, as we wished. About twice a month an accountant from Sang Kee would come up to the Peak for an evening in order to transfer and rationalise all the miscellaneous accounts and copy them into their proper "ledgers."

## FIVE

# Sheung Fu Girls' School

From the beginning of 1919 until the summer of 1921 we had an interval in our English studies, during which time we became serious students of Chinese. This occurred shortly after Eva and I had taken the Hong Kong Senior Local Examination, which was then the highest academic goal for girls in Hong Kong. Having reached this point, some girls took commercial courses that would qualify them for secretarial or clerical posts; others undertook nursing training or studied to become primary school teachers. Besides these three avenues, there was practically nothing else career-wise open to girls in Hong Kong, especially if they wanted to pursue an academic future. Eva and I had graduated from the Diocesan Girls' School at the end of December 1918, when she was 15 and a half years old and I was 14. We were considered too young to discontinue our studies, but our next step was not immediately clear.

It was Mamma who eventually found us a new school, perhaps by fortunate coincidence. This came about when she was visiting our eldest sister-in-law, Mrs Ho Wing, whose second daughter, Miu Kwan (Diana), attended Sheung Fu Girls' School. Mamma asked to see some of her textbooks and samples of her homework and was impressed by the careful corrections and comments that the teachers had made on Diana's written work. Therefore when she returned home, she told Eva and me that she would like us to apply to Sheung Fu Girls' School. Since she also wanted us to have time to do other things, such as helping her at home and learning to play the violin and piano, she wanted us to attend classes for only half a day. We were advised by the school principal to join the highest class, since in it all the important subjects were scheduled for

mornings. This was because two of the senior masters also taught at St Stephen's Girls' College, a grant-aided secondary school, two afternoons a week.

The main Chinese classics lesson, which consisted of several different activities, lasted about 90 minutes every morning. Each student was first given up to 10 minutes to relearn the passage that had been set for intensive study, often just the previous day. The students memorized as much as possible at home or whenever they had a chance to recite it, with or without referring to their textbooks. I was quite scared by the idea of entering the top class at a school for classical Chinese, as I did not have enough confidence in my own background for such advanced studies. However, there seemed to be no other choice. Fortunately, the teachers and many of my fellow students were sympathetic and helpful and explained everything to Eva and me clearly and concisely.

Instead of covering a large number of subjects, with each period lasting only 30 to 40 minutes, the main subject at Sheung Fu was an intensive study of one or more of the *Four Books* and the *Five Classics* (sets of standard Chinese texts). This was supplemented by other lessons on ancient Chinese literature, history, geography, arithmetic, poetry, art, and composition. In the poetry class we learned some of the *Three Hundred Poems of the Tang Dynasty*. Another text was a book of classical stories, each of which is summarised at the top of the page in a four-character phrase in large print, forming the top of a column, with a detailed account of the story below. We also learned a little about Chinese painting in the art class; indeed I can still remember the fancy names given to the various colours we used. During our first two years the school selected the *Book of Rites* and then the *Book of Changes*, both of which are old Chinese classics. Later, when my younger sister Jean attended the same school, she studied the *Book of Records* and the *Book of Odes*.

Whatever the text, the methods of teaching were the same. In classical studies the teacher would first read the passage once or twice, slowly and distinctly, sometimes leading the class in this activity so they would know how to pronounce each word (character) from the start. Usually at this stage, the teacher would carefully extemporise on the whole passage or a section of it in order to imprint its meaning on the class. It was necessary for the student to thoroughly master the correct wording of the original text and the exact characters to be used.

Students would eventually have to recite the whole passage by heart following a slow and precise reading by the teacher. When the student came to write the passage, every stroke had to be properly and delicately executed. Younger students would be given their first lessons in calligraphy with the teacher standing directly behind them and guiding their hands to execute the brush strokes from top to bottom and from left to right. Chinese calligraphy is an art form to be learned with prolonged patience and perseverance. However, when thoroughly mastered, it is said to be "worth its weight in gold."

The start of our education at Sheung Fu Girls' School coincided with preparations for the birth of Vic's first baby. I was quite excited because since my childhood days I had felt very close to my eldest sister. She had always been extra kind and affectionate to me because I had been such a delicate child. When it was time for her confinement, Mamma and Vic's husband M.K. made every arrangement to give her the best possible care. The baby was to be delivered at Nettlewood, their home in Robinson Road. In those days most deliveries were conducted at home, unless the doctor advised otherwise. As a matter of course, Mamma went down to stay with Vic so that she could assist the European doctor, an Australian-trained Eurasian midwife, and others in the retinue. M.K. went to another room so that Mamma could remain with Vic in the bedroom, which had twin beds. An old Chinese midwife—Auntie Ching, who had helped Mamma during many of her own confinements—was also there to help, and they had of course already engaged an amah to look after the infant when it arrived.

The baby, born in February 1919, was named Gwendolene May Lo. Gwen was a pretty infant from the outset, but after only three days she had little white spots in her mouth and developed jaundice. She cried a lot, day and night, and was running a fever. Being a devoted mother, Vic was naturally quite worried about the health of her precious first-born. By coincidence, on that third day Vic's sister-in-law Doris was married to our cousin, Ho Ki, the ninth son of Uncle Ho Fook. The wedding reception was held at the home of the bride's parents (Vic's parents-in-law), just below Vic's house, so many of the relatives and friends who came to attend the wedding also went up to congratulate Vic and see the baby. In those days, the regular Chinese custom among relatives and close friends was to show interest and concern in this way. However, little consideration was given to the fact that this could be

extremely tiring for the new mother. Also according to custom, the third day following a live birth was an important date. The family would send hard-boiled eggs dyed red and slices of young ginger to relatives and friends as a way of announcing the birth of the baby. Sometimes this custom would be postponed until the twelfth day, and I remember that this was done for Gwen's birth.

One day while the baby was ill, Eva and I paid a visit to Mamma and Vic after school. Mamma asked us to stay there instead of going home, as she felt she might have some odd jobs for us to do. We could go to the Chinese school from Robinson Road instead of the Peak. Gwen gradually recovered from her jaundice. However, I can still remember vividly that early on the twelfth day Mamma came into our room to tell us that Vic had had a bad night and that neither of them had slept at all. Now it was Vic who was seriously ill. Mamma seemed to have suddenly aged. Her hair looked as if white powder had been sprinkled on it. Indeed, the worry of it all had turned her grey overnight. I went in to see Vic and she was weeping, calling for "Mummy" in a pitiful, childlike voice. She held my hand tightly, and I noticed that she had lost so much weight that her wedding ring was loose and kept slipping off her finger. She was also worried about her own and the baby's illness. Mamma and I tried to reassure her that the baby was getting better and did our best to comfort her, but she remained sick for many months. Once, when she was delirious, she cried out: "There are three coffins under the bed: one for Grandma, one for Mamma, and one for me."

Of course Grandma had been dead for years, but somehow Vic had evidently forgotten, and she also started to imagine that Mamma was nearing death herself. Many people had suggestions or advice as to what might bring her back to health, but it was one of Hong Kong's leading physicians, Dr Arthur Woo, who provided the best help. He examined Vic and told Mamma that his friend, a prominent American gynecologist, would soon be visiting Hong Kong and should be asked to examine Vic. Mamma jumped at the suggestion and drafted a detailed report on Vic's delivery and subsequent illness to assist him. His diagnosis was that Vic's problem was probably due to "auto-intoxication during childbirth," commonly known today as post-partum depression. He was satisfied that Mamma and Vic's doctors were working along the correct lines and complimented Mamma on her concise report and the excellent nursing care she had given Vic. This at least reassured Mamma that she was doing the right thing, but she also asked other doctors to

examine Vic. Everyone had different opinions and diagnoses, and Mamma even tried traditional Chinese medicines. Our fifth paternal uncle—Mr Ho Kom-tong, an expert herbalist in his own right—brought along a man who was considered to be the leading Chinese herbalist of the day: Mr Choy Wing-nam, a good friend whom he had always admired. Mr Choy took Vic's pulse, examined her tongue, asked many questions, and finally prescribed some herbal medicine that had to be carefully brewed. We all hoped it would work and cure Vic, but it did not.

Vic was eventually moved to the Peak. As Father was away at the time, she and Mamma stayed in his room at No 83. Finally, to make it easier for Dr Balean to see her, Mamma again moved Vic—this time to the Peak Hospital a short distance from the upper station of the Peak tram, which was convenient for everyone concerned. The Peak Hospital administrators allowed Mamma to have two rooms, one for Vic and the other for herself, and I visited them every day. Eventually Mamma took Father's advice and arranged to take Vic on a trip to Tsingtao, bringing both Eva and myself and several staff to help look after Vic. That trip, I believe, is what eventually cured Vic. When the long, hot summer finally drew to a close, we all returned to Hong Kong in good health.

After Vic's recovery, Eva and I resumed our studies at Sheung Fu Girls' School. During the summer holidays the school had moved from a house almost opposite our Third Uncle Ho Fook's home in Caine Road to a larger building in a lane called Coronation Terrace, off Caine Road. It was at the top of Aberdeen Street, which had Queen's College at its lower end. The classroom and laboratories of Queen's were used by the Technical Institute in the evenings. This was convenient for us because we could remain in the Sheung Fu classroom to complete our homework and then stroll or run down the hill to attend classes at the institute. When we were at the old school building, we walked across the road every day to have lunch with the Ho Fook family. The lunch arrangements at the new school building were different. Because it was much nearer Idlewild, Lady Margaret arranged to send one of her amahs with our lunch so that we could eat at our desks during the midday break. We were thus saved the trouble of walking home during the hottest part of the day under the relentless tropical sun, especially as this involved climbing up a flight of more than 50 steps and then negotiating them down on the return trip. It was considerate of Lady Margaret and the amah to help us in this way, and we greatly appreciated it.

My elder brother Eddie was the extrovert of the family and in



those days was often surrounded by a large group of friends. From time to time, when he was in the upper classes of Queen's College—and especially when he was living in the university hostel, Lugard Hall—he liked to bring a group of his pals home for a meal. As I was then keeping house for Mamma, he would often ring me up first, but at other times his group would just arrive without notice. There were no shops of any kind at the Peak in those days, so I would always have a supply of tinned foods and such that could be prepared at short notice for unexpected guests. Among Eddie's friends, two especially stood out and later became my good friends as well. Their names were Lau Chung and Wei Tat. They were a year or two senior to Eddie and hence several years older than me. Later, when I entered university, they helped me settle in and find my way around. Both were excellent Chinese scholars who also lived at Lugard Hall. Eventually Lau became a successful businessman and the "eldest brother" in my class group. When we first met Wei Tat, he was studying hard for the Matriculation Examination. His perseverance was well rewarded, because he won the Chinese President's Scholarship for the highest score among all the candidates of Chinese nationality, and he was awarded a couple of other scholarships as well. His family persuaded him to take the commercial course at the university. After graduation he served as secretary to a number of organisations and well-known persons, including Father.

Wei was an excellent teacher and later became headmaster at his own evening school, where he taught English. However, Wei Tat is best known as a philosopher and scholar. He used the *I Ching* (*Book of Changes*) for his Master's thesis at The University of Hong Kong. Later he expanded his work and published a book on the *I Ching*, the most abstruse of all the Chinese classics. He produced a careful translation and interpretation of the first two hexagrams and gave a general description of the whole book's theory. He was also able to write excellent English and eventually produced several other books, interpreting each of the three Chinese philosophies: Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism.

Lau wrote excellent Chinese calligraphy, some of which I have kept. As I used to prefer using a man-sized fan during Hong Kong's hot and humid summers, Wei procured one of these for me and asked Lau to write a text in Chinese upon it to seal the lifelong friendship among the three of us. The texts used for the calligraphy are my favourite passages: the first two hexagrams of the *I Ching*, which deal with the

yang and the yin. Lau copied the two chapters in beautiful calligraphy and then inscribed and dedicated the fan to me, saying that it was presented by both of them. Wei has now passed away, but Lau is still going strong, though he is about five years older than me. I have now given the side of the fan containing the first hexagram that refers to the male (yang) element to Wei's youngest son, Dr Patrick Wei, a well-known pediatrician. The female (yin) element of the fan concerning the second hexagram I gave to Lau's daughter, Maria, a successful stockbroker who is now married and the mother of two girls. She is one of my most filial god-daughters.

Returning to Vic, during the early part of her illness Father was away, first in America and then in Shanghai. He kept in contact by cable but it was not until his return to Hong Kong that he convinced mother to take Vic away for a complete change of climate and scenery. Since it was almost summer, Mamma decided to take her to Tsingtao, where the climate was much better. It was also the home of our good friend Dr Weischer, in whose skills Mamma had the greatest confidence. On the morning of our departure, Vic was taken by stretcher from the Peak Hospital to the Peak tram, which ran a special slow trip so that she would not be jolted or upset by the vehicle's motion. This seemed a sensible, steady way to carry her down to Hong Kong. Our relatives and friends came to Queen's Pier to see us off. We went by launch to board the steamer anchored in Victoria Harbour, which then set off around the eastern coast of China to Shanghai. Later, the vessel proceeded to Tsingtao, its next port of call.

We took Vic by ambulance from the boat straight to the Faber Krankenhaus, the hospital where Dr Weischer was in charge. We had several rooms, and Eva and I shared one that had eiderdown covers on the beds. These were huge bags of light goose feathers that kept us very warm. They fascinated me because they were a form of German bedcover that the Weischers had introduced. We stayed at the hospital for only a few days, however. Dr Weischer was well known in Tsingtao and was a good friend of the British Consul-General, whose wife and children were away for the summer holidays. Since the Consul was living by himself in his big house, Dr Weischer persuaded him to stay at the Tsingtao Club instead and rent out his house and servants to us, which he did. After we moved to this house, Vic began to recover quickly, responding well to Dr Weischer's treatment. Because she had been in

bed for so long and her ankles had not been exercised, she could not put her heels on the floor when she first got up. Mamma and Dr Weischer or a nurse would help her stand as she learned to walk again. Mamma had asked me to keep a detailed report concerning my sister's recovery, and I remember that during the first week at the house Vic slept so much that she put on 10 pounds in weight. This was a good thing because, not being able to eat properly, she had previously suffered considerable weight loss. Anyway, things were starting to go well for her at last.

M.K. had accompanied us to Tsingtao, but since Vic was doing so much better, after a fortnight or so he felt he ought to return to his job. After his return from England, he had started a law firm in Hong Kong, Messrs Lo and Lo, a firm that is now quite famous. Of course in 1919 it was a brand new concern, and there was much work to be done. He and his brother, M.W. Lo, ran the firm alone except for the assistance of one or two secretaries and law clerks. Every day after breakfast, while Vic was sleeping, Eva, M.K., and I would take a walk into the nearby town. Sometimes we would just window shop or buy simple little things. M.K. was very generous and always paid for our purchases. The chief cook at the house was an enterprising fellow, to say the least. He had an assistant, but did not pay him wages. Instead, he taught him some pidgin English, which he claimed would be useful should he eventually find a job in a western household. He also taught the man some western-style cooking in return for doing all the kitchen cleaning and numerous other odd jobs.

After some months, Vic was so much better that the doctor said Mamma could get away for a few days to see a famous Taoist temple on a nearby mountain, Lau Shan. Mamma took Eva with her while I stayed on to keep Vic company. Eva took some good photos of the temple and surrounding scenery. Later Dr Weischer recommended that Vic should also do some travelling and suggested that we take a trip to Tsinanfu, the capital city of Shantung Province. We also visited the Yellow River (Hwang Ho) and the huge bridge that crosses it. There was a man at the foot of the bridge selling watermelons by the piece, but Mamma was extra careful and asked him to cut us a fresh one. It was very sweet but even the pulp of the melon was a little warm. We travelled on rickshaws on the way home, and all of us had tummy aches and diarrhea. Although the man had cut a new melon, the cloth he used to wipe the knife was probably dirty.

From Tsinanfu we went to Chufu, where the sage Confucius had been born. This was also where he taught his disciples and was finally buried. We were told that his principal direct descendant always inherited the title of Yen Shing Kung (Duke), along with the responsibility to attend to the Confucius spring and autumn memorial services. Mamma asked me to write a brief message on her visiting card to the principal descendant, Madame Kung, advising her that we were from Hong Kong and would like to call upon her to pay our respects. Madame Kung was pregnant at the time with her son, who later became the next Duke. When he grew up he travelled widely, including a visit to Taiwan and Hong Kong, where he wrote a fan for me.

Finally we made a never-to-be-forgotten trip up Taishan, the highest mountain in China proper. This mountain was such a popular tourist attraction that travelling there was quite well organised. Mamma hired four "mountain climbing chairs," each with three bearers—two to carry the chair while the third walked alongside until it was his turn again. Unlike other sedan chairs, these were fitted with leather straps that were attached to carrying poles and passed over the bearer's shoulder to assist him in lifting his burden to waist level. The chairs were carried sideways up the hillside and the many flights of steps that had to be traversed. Of necessity, every now and then each chair-bearer would change the load to his other shoulder.

From time to time we would come upon a little tea shop where the bearers would set us down and suggest we take some refreshment. Of course Mamma paid for their tea as well as for our own. Whenever we saw some particularly attractive scenery, the bearers would halt to allow us time to admire it and let Eva take photographs with her camera. There were many large smooth rock surfaces on which huge Chinese characters had been chiselled, including special stone tablets set up for the purpose. They often carried poems or prose to express wonder and admiration at such beautiful scenery. At one place, not far from the foot of the mountain range, we saw a stand of five old pine trees. One of the trees, said the bearers, had given shelter from a sudden rainstorm to the notorious First Emperor of the Chin Dynasty. When the Emperor returned to his capital, which was then called Chang An (now Xian), he gave the tree due recognition by appointing it to be a government official (ta fu) of the fifth rank. I first heard that story in 1919 and all along thought that the five conifers had all been made officials. It was not until I returned in 1981 that I realised I had made a

mistake. I had been confused because the name appeared to be Five Ta Fu Pine(s)—and yes, there were five pine trees. However, the correct meaning was actually the Pine with the Fifth Rank of Ta Fu, in recognition of the tree that provided the Emperor with shelter.

The scenery around the Taishan district was really wonderful. At the foot of the range we looked up and saw a gigantic mountain towering above us and thought that this must actually be Taishan. But when we got nearer, we found that there was another tier of peaks above it, and then another and another. We allowed ourselves the whole day to ascend the slopes and noted that above a certain height the trees were practically all evergreens: first there were more pines, later mainly Cyprus. Finally we came to a really steep slope that had hardly any trees on it at all. At the very top of the ascent, there was a long steep flight of steps leading to a gate on which there was a little rectangular archway. It had an inscription that stated, "This is the Gate of Heaven."

At the very top, a Taoist monastery served as an inn for travellers. Just before we bedded down for the night, one of the monks asked whether we wanted to be awakened to see the sunrise. Of course, Mamma said yes. To our surprise, it was only 2:30 am when we were called to get up. We thought that the hour was rather early, but the priests assured us there was little time to spare and advised us to dress as warmly as we could. Soon after we got outside the monastery, the underside of the clouds in the east lit up with a reddish-orange glow, and gradually all the rivers and lakes glistened with light. The Yellow River (Huang Ho) looked like a long white tape curling across the valley floor below. We could see hundreds of lakes, all of which looked like so many little puddles. Shortly, a red dot appeared in the east, then blossomed into a red line that suddenly seemed to jump up, and we could see a ball of red fire. It was a sight never to be forgotten. We stayed in the monastery for two nights, and there were beautiful sunrises on both mornings. We were told that sometimes it got so cloudy that visitors might stay for several days and never see a sunrise at all, so we were most fortunate.

After some weeks of travelling and sightseeing, we returned to Tsingtao. Later, Mamma brought us back to Shanghai. From there we went to one of her favourite Buddhist temples, the Hung Fat Fong on Puto Mountain near the Yangtse River, where we stayed for a whole month. While there, Mamma had the High Priest spend an hour or so each day explaining some of the more difficult passages of Buddhist scripture to

her. Eventually we all returned to Hong Kong, by which time the extreme heat and humidity of its summer were over.

Life back in Hong Kong was not without excitement. We were all fond of animals, so when someone gave Eddie a monkey we all took a keen interest in its antics and semi-human characteristics. During the day it was tied by a long, light chain attached to a collar around its neck. The chain was attached to a faucet in the backyard of the bungalow, No 50. Here the monkey was able to watch people go back and forth on their errands, so it was by no means lonely. However, as the monkey seemed quite friendly, one day I thought it might like to go for a walk. Freeing the chain, I took the monkey up to and along the roadway just above our two houses. We came down again at No 49, crossed the tennis court between the two houses, and entered No 50. Here my sister Jean was sitting in the veranda "schoolroom," practising her calligraphy at the teacher's desk. After a short chat with Jean, I gave the chain a tug as a sign to the monkey that we were just about to leave. The monkey must have had other ideas, because he then bit me on the tip of the ring finger on my left hand. The wound was quite painful and bleeding so I rushed outside, re-tied the monkey to its faucet, and then rinsed my finger with some cool water from the tap. I held the finger up and after a short while it stopped bleeding.

The wound itself was not very big but after Eddie, Eva, and I had discussed the matter, it was decided that we should consult Dr Saunders, who was in charge of Matilda Hospital on Mount Kellett Road. I made the phone call, and he was highly concerned. "What? A monkey bite? The King of Greece died of a monkey bite," he said. He instructed us to tie up our dogs so that his chair coolies would not be bothered by them, then he came round to cauterise my wound. He asked us to send the monkey to him for examination in case it had rabies. I also had to go each day to the hospital for an anti-rabies injection. We promised him that we would take his advice, but then Eddie, Eva, and I discussed the situation and realised that the monkey would have to be "put down" before they could ascertain whether it had rabies. In any event I would have to take the course of injections as a precautionary measure. Therefore I decided not to send the monkey to the doctor. Although we observed it carefully each day, we found no hint of rabies. Dr Saunders accepted our decision to keep the monkey, but every day our chair coolies took me up to the Matilda, where I was given the whole series of anti-rabies injections. For a long time I had the uneasy thought that one

day I might really develop the disease. For some time I kept my personal possessions extra tidy and ready in case I should suddenly be laid low and die from the terrible affliction.

## The University of Hong Kong

**C**hiefly due to the encouragement of Mamma and Miss Nora Bascombe of Diocesan Girls' School (DGS), Eva and I acquired a love for learning and hoped to continue our studies. We obtained good results at DGS, but it was not clear where we would go from there. Had we been men, we would have automatically considered applying to enter The University of Hong Kong (HKU). Until then, this established and reputable institution had admitted only male students. Thanks to the foresight and perseverance of Miss Bascombe, who had carefully studied the regulations for admission of students to HKU, we had taken all the required subjects for matriculation at the right time and only the matter of our gender could be held against us as prospective students.

Miss Bascombe's guidance was all the more praiseworthy when it is considered that even the headmistress at DGS, Miss Skipton, then believed it was unnecessary for girls to study any branch of mathematics other than arithmetic. She thought that as long as her girls could handle their family or personal accounts, or perhaps work as a cashier in a shop or firm, their mathematical education was sufficient. Under Miss Bascombe's devoted tutelage, we had managed to progress far beyond this point.

As a result, in December 1918 we had already passed the Matriculation Exam with all necessary subjects and were ready to face the prospect of a university education. Had we been boys, the Senior Local Examination results, when published, would have read: "Entered for Senior Local Examination but qualified for Matriculation." Because we were mere girls, our names simply came out in the pass list, and



nothing more was said about it. If we were to attempt to enter university, we could expect to meet with some resistance. Indeed, a couple of years earlier, DGS had asked HKU if it would be willing to let Anna Braun, a very bright student of German and Chinese extraction, attend as an external student. Because this request had been refused, nobody else tried or dared to say anything about us entering.

Time dragged on, but fortunately for us the director of education in 1921 was Mr E.A. Irving, who had served as HKU's first registrar. His daughter, Rachel, wanted to complete her education at HKU. She had previously obtained a Social Science Certificate at Bedford College, London University, and therefore was well qualified to do so. HKU at first refused her application, so the matter was referred to the attorney-general. He took a pragmatic view of the situation and asked to see a copy of the university's statutes. He pointed out that in accordance with the statutes then in place, "any person who has passed the prescribed examination and is over 16 years of age may, on payment of the prescribed fee, be admitted to the university." Consequently, on June 23, 1921, the Senate resolved to admit Miss Irving to the third-year arts course and, because there was no hostel accommodation for girls at that time, exempted her from residence.

At that time our brother Eddie was a student at HKU and was quite friendly with the registrar. He came home one day and told Eva and myself: "If you girls want to go to university, now is your chance." He explained the events surrounding Miss Irving's admission and, of course, he already knew that we had passed the equivalent of the Matriculation Examination as early as December 1918. We asked him to take our certificates back to the registrar, and it was found that they could immediately be exchanged for matriculation certificates. Each of us had passed in nine matriculation subjects when the required minimum was five.

During that summer and autumn Eva was in Beijing with our parents, so when the new term opened in September, I entered as the first local girl to join the university, enrolling in the first-year arts course. Apart from Rachel Irving and myself there was only one other female student enrolled at the university that first term, Miss Lai Po-chuen, who was studying medicine. The effect we created can be imagined. We were three women students among a total enrollment of about 300, or just one per cent of the total. For my studies I selected Group I, which was called Letters and Philosophy. For the first year, the prescribed

subjects were English, Chinese, logic, history, and geography. I added mathematics, and at year's end I sat my exams in all these subjects and passed.

The decision to admit women students was such an innovation that the authorities had forgotten to provide us with a common room or any other special facilities such as a rest room. If I had one or more free periods, I could only go to the library or wait about in the corridors. If I ventured into the Students' Union building, I would find myself in the midst of a horde of men. In this building there were meeting rooms, with the Jordan Memorial Library upstairs and a billiards room and tea room downstairs. In fairness, I must say that despite being females, we were readily accepted by the faculty and fellow students. This made life much easier for the three of us.

With some diffidence, I asked Eddie if he could speak to the registrar about the common room and rest room problem. The registrar immediately recognized our needs and earmarked one of the faculty restrooms, the one at the top of the eastern stairs, for our use. He also gave us the large faculty common room at the top of the main staircase as a common room for the "lady undergraduates," with this title painted in gold lettering outside the door. Into the bargain he engaged an amah to clean and tidy these special rooms. When we needed supplies, I would write out the requisition orders for her. Each day, around lunch time, she would ask if we wanted anything from the kitchen in the Union building and then bring it up to us.

Soon after the term opened, Eddie and some of his friends arranged a walking picnic in which two of the younger faculty members participated. One, a lecturer in geography, boasted that he had given the first lecture attended by a "lady undergrad"—who just happened to be me! Professor Brown, who was dean that year and also taught mathematics, was always kind to the women students. I found his classes extremely interesting. When he asked questions of the class and nobody else answered, I would sometimes volunteer. However, being shy, I did not like to do this too often, so I would remain silent even when I knew the answer. Professor Brown was a seasoned lecturer and often countered this trait by saying: "Ladies first," to give me the opportunity to respond.

In recent years, many decades after the event, I asked one of my former classmates at HKU what he had thought when he first heard about women joining varsity. He had then been at Queen's College, a

Hong Kong government secondary school for boys. He replied that he and his classmates had heard about it during the summer and were quite pleased with the idea. However, he confessed that when he and some of his old schoolmates joined HKU, they would often occupy the ends of the long benches in the lecture rooms so that I would have to ask them to let me in. I always liked to sit near the centre of the first or second rows because I wanted to hear the lecturer and see the blackboard clearly.

The first-year English class had some 60 students and the lecturer, Mr Birch, would commence by calling the roll. I tried to listen attentively so that I could match faces to names, but this turned out to be a gradual process. It was many months before I became familiar and friendly with them all. I was then only 17 and, apart from some relatives and friends, this was my first experience of meeting large numbers of young men. Hong Kong society was then extremely conservative, and we felt that this university experience was a special privilege for girls and that we must not spoil the chances for future generations of the so-called fairer sex. I was determined not to show any particular favouritism, nor to give cause for scandal. I tried to be civil and polite to anyone who spoke to me, without expecting any formal introduction. Actually, I already knew a few fellows more senior than I because of Eddie, who sometimes brought student friends home to our house at the Peak for a meal. Occasionally some of them would invite us down to the Students' Union tea room for sandwiches and refreshments.

Hardly ever were these gatherings just *fête-à-fête* sessions, because that would have been rather conspicuous and given the wrong impression. However, in the years to come, many of our classmates and fellow students became lifelong friends. In fact, the members of our own class have kept in touch with one another over the decades. After the World War II years, I organised group gatherings several times a year and kept a record of the classmates' names, addresses, phone numbers, and birthdays. Later, some of the members gave the group a name, the I Fung Sheh, after one of our classmates, Cheong Wai-fung, and myself. Even now, when I periodically return to Hong Kong from San Diego, we still try to hold a gathering. I notice that at these get-togethers my former classmates often seem years younger than they actually are. Perhaps these occasional meetings make them feel younger as we reminisce about our university days.

Although there were only three women undergraduates—Miss Rachel Irving (3rd-year Arts), Miss Lai Po-chuen (1st-year Med), and me (1st-year Arts)—that first term, which lasted from September to December 1921, the following term we were joined by Eva and an English girl from Changsha. By December 1922 four more local girls had qualified for matriculation and become university students. They were followed the next month by one more young woman from Beijing, who was studying engineering. So now there were ten girls among a student body of about 300. As public opinion in Hong Kong was ultra-conservative in those days, many people were skeptical about the wisdom of admitting girls to the university, fearing that the men might become distracted and not pay attention to their studies.

Some readers might also think: "What an opportunity for the girls to find husbands." Actually, the opposite was true, both in my own mind and in the minds of most of my contemporaries. We had for so long expected to be denied the chance to obtain higher education that we were eager and thirsty for knowledge. Moreover, we felt it our duty to prove, academically, that we deserved the opportunities that had been opened up to us. I must confess that I was personally a little concerned because we had left our English school two and a half years before entering university. I hoped this would not adversely affect my ability to study in the English language. There were periodic tests for each of the subjects we took, and the results were invariably posted on the notice board. Fortunately, most of the time I stayed near the top of the lists.

We girls may have been breaking into what had previously been considered a man's domain, but this at times worked to our advantage since many of the students and faculty went out of their way to help and encourage us. I recall one incident when I was preparing for the annual exam in Chinese. One of Eddie's friends, whom I knew, met me in the corridor one day and told me that Dr C.H. Lai, professor of Chinese history, enjoyed asking questions in his essay exam about the Great Yu, who controlled the flood around 2200 B.C. in China. He told me that the library had a number of old textbooks and reference books on the subject that might help me. Following his advice I spent a couple of hours during the weekend looking up those books. Sure enough, the subject came up in the exam. Due to the tip I had been given I had ample material to draw upon for my essay. Dr Lai had a son in the class above me to whom he showed my essay, saying: "You boys had better work hard or the girls will do better than you." The son must have been

somewhat impressed because he made a copy of my essay and showed it to some of his friends at the hostel.

Many other incidents illustrate the interest taken by the male students in everything we girls did. On one occasion, Professor Vickers, a psychologist, gave us a non-linguistic memory test during one of his lectures. From what I can recollect, we were shown a number of geometric shapes and then asked to reproduce them immediately from memory. He took the papers home, scored them, and then the following week again asked us to try to reproduce those shapes. When he finally collated both results and brought them back to class, he said he was pleased to announce that the female student (me) had achieved an excellent score on both occasions. Later that day when Eva saw me, she asked me why I had not told her about my test score. I explained that I had not yet had the chance because I had not seen her except during a hurried lunch together. It turned out that some of my classmates had talked about the incident at lunch in their hostel and, when they saw Eva afterwards, told her about it. That was typical of how "news" about the girls travelled at the university. Another time, a lecturer brought a frog to class in order to demonstrate its reflex actions. He stuck a pin in the frog's neck, gave it a quick twist, and its legs kicked violently. I thought this was a cruel thing to do and involuntarily shuddered. A couple of weeks later, the *Union* magazine came out, and one of the brief items asked: "Who is the lady undergraduate who shuddered when she saw a frog being stuck with a pin?"

In the spring of 1922, because the university could now boast of having women students, the Arts Association, at the suggestion of its energetic president, Professor Walter Brown, decided to invite lady guests as well as men to its annual dinner. Many of the town's distinguished residents, especially those in high government offices and leading commercial firms, together with their ladies were invited. Most were seated at the Great Hall's high table, on either side of the Arts Association president and other office-bearers. At the centre table were eight seats, four of which were occupied by the women students then enrolled at HKU: Rachel Irving, Lai Po-chuen, Eva, and myself. We were accompanied by four young men, including two Arts Association committee members: an Indian student, M.A. Khan; a Japanese student; our brother, Eddie, who was chairman of the Students' Union; and M.K. Yue, who was then honorary secretary of the Students' Union.

Every care had been taken to make the evening run smoothly,

and we had arranged for the Hong Kong Hotel to cater and provide the staff needed to serve the dinner and drinks. Seeing such a large gathering, the waiters immediately opened a large number of bottles, both wine and liquor. Actually, apart from the invited guests, whose drinks had certainly been paid for, few students would drink in public—especially as they would have had to pay for what they consumed themselves. Consequently, there were a great many open bottles of wine left over, which the hotel included in the bill that was eventually rendered. At the committee meeting that dealt with the matter, we honestly felt that the Arts Association could not afford to foot the wine bill. Finally, Professor Brown paid for the drinks himself, a generous gesture that might have left him well out of pocket.

As the university had moved the beginning of the academic year from January to September, those in our first-year class who passed the annual examination were promoted to second year in January 1923. The University of Hong Kong followed the pattern of British universities rather than that of American institutions, so instead of students enrolling in a number of subjects, each with its distinctive credits, the curriculum for each student was determined in accordance with the course he or she took. In the arts faculty there were five "groups" from which we could choose: Group I, Letters and Philosophy; Group II, Pure Science; Group III, Social Science; Group IVa, Science Teachers; Group IVb, General Teachers; and Group V, Commercial. When I joined the university, I had selected Group I, and for the second year my required subjects were English, history, Chinese (literature and history), and psychology. In addition, I attended all the mathematics lectures and completed the homework; I did not sit the exam in this subject, even though I had passed maths in the first year.

At the end of my second year, there was a competitive scholarship donated by my third uncle, Ho Fook, and it was announced that I had won. This caused me some personal embarrassment. Therefore, I went to the registrar's office and asked him to give the monetary award to the student who came second, a Eurasian, but asked him and the student concerned not to tell anyone. I expect that some of my classmates felt I should not have kept the money, as my family could well afford to pay for my needs. However, I did not say anything about it, and I believe to this day that hardly anyone else knows. At the time, I did not want to embarrass the other student. Anyhow I believe the award, although not large, was helpful to him at the time because his father

had died when he and his brother were still quite young. All the same, I now feel I can clear up any minor stain that the incident might have made upon my reputation.

For our third and fourth years at HKU the number of subjects to be taken was again reduced. The idea was that we should devote more time to each subject and thus study it more intensely. I was expected to do only three subjects in the third year and two in the fourth. When I applied to visit the United States in 1966, I wrote to the registrar to get a copy of my transcript. This document showed that I had taken four subjects instead of three in the third year. Again I had been greedy for knowledge, passing in English, history, ethics, and jurisprudence; the following year I took only two subjects, English and political science. My choice of subjects was influenced by the fact that I was the only student in my group. As a result, I had been advised to join the Group III students to study jurisprudence and political science in the third and fourth years respectively. I enjoyed those subjects and afterwards found them quite useful in life. Anyway, there was no way that I could have expected the university to provide a lecturer in philosophy for just one student. In those final years, I also obtained permission to take some educational courses as electives, especially those given by the new lecturer in psychology, Professor John Nind Smith. On one occasion he took the education students as a group to observe the government-run secondary school for girls, Belilios Public School, and I joined them.

The British way of teaching English differed from that in the United States, as I came to realise in 1926 when I travelled with a graduate from an American university and another from Oxford. The U.S. graduate seemed to have engaged in some sort of survey of English and American literature, whereas we studied a few well-known authors more intensely. Naturally, we also studied various aspects of English literature, both poetry and prose, but each year we had one or more specific books upon which we concentrated. These we had to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest," so that they became an integral part of our personalities. The books included Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield*; Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*; Shakespeare's *As You Like It* and *Macbeth*; plus various poems by Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Browning, Tennyson, and Milton, along with other English literary masterpieces. For history we had an outside lecturer for the first term of the first year. After him we studied under the Rev. Romanis Lee, a kindly and exceedingly knowledgeable scholar whose feet I "sat under" for

three years. Even after Eva and I had left HKU and were in England Rev. Lee, who was then in Cambridge, continued to take a fatherly interest in my studies and gave me considerable support by enabling me to see some good industrial welfare projects in Great Britain.

Our first-year class at HKU began with about 60 men. Although some of them dropped out after the first or second years, as the only female I was still something of a novelty. Of course I was only 17 when we started, and we "lady undergraduates" thought of ourselves more as girls than as women. Our main objective was to keep up with academic life at the varsity, so we had little time for frivolities. I gradually got used to the idea that I was the only girl in my class and must honestly say that my classmates were gentlemanly and cooperative. There was a strong fraternal comradeship between us. My fellow students came from all around Southeast Asia. I remember we had about three dozen Chinese boys from Hong Kong, the majority of whom had come from Queen's College. Most of this group took the education course. They were reserved and polite, and it was difficult to know what they really thought and felt. A few other local boys came from the territory's grant-aided schools. These included pure Chinese and Eurasians, and they were a little more fluent in spoken English, a little more westernised in their habits, and perhaps a little less reserved.

Among the few students from mainland China, I particularly remember a boy from Shanghai. His English was extremely good, he had a relaxed western-like manner, and he smoked heavily, even though he was a Mohammedan. Another of his compatriots, a government scholar from Yunnan, was almost the opposite. His English was weak, and he was neither westernised nor sociable, though he too could be friendly if there was any need to be so. The contingent from Malaya numbered less than a dozen and were mainly educational scholars with fairly good English. All of them, except one or two, were of Chinese ancestry, having Chinese surnames pronounced in the Fukienese dialect. Most of their mothers, and perhaps their grandmothers, were Malayan. At that time Singapore and Penang were under British rule, so they held British passports. They were quite westernised and active, athletic and sociable. Despite their heritage, hardly any of them could speak a word of Chinese, and I was told that in those days their government's policy forbade them from learning the language at a Chinese school, which seemed rather unfortunate. In recent years I was glad to learn from a



Singaporean friend that now all children of Chinese descent must learn Chinese, English, and Malay.

Among this cosmopolitan band of students were two of East Indian descent. One was the son of a well-known Hong Kong merchant and had grown up in the territory, while the other came from India and was a good violinist. When Mamma and I were in London in 1927-28, he also happened to be doing postgraduate work in London and took us to a concert at the Albert Hall. However, music was merely his hobby, and he later became an internationally-known chartered accountant. I visited him in Calcutta and Bombay, in both of which cities his company maintained offices. There was also a Japanese student whom we soon lost touch with after we left the university. However, many of the relationships remained staunch and sometimes with the passing of years enveloped relatives. For example, we had one classmate from French Indo-China, which later became Vietnam, then called Annam. He had originally been sent by his family to a Roman Catholic secondary school in Hong Kong and was a good French scholar as well as being reasonably fluent in English. Although short of stature, he was an extremely quiet, thoughtful, and sensitive person. He is dead now, but I am still in occasional correspondence with his widow, whom I twice met in Saigon when visiting the family there in the 1950s. She does not know English, but her children translate for her.

Although I was friendly to all my classmates, I veered away from close personal relationships and tried hard not to become involved emotionally with any of them. This was mainly because I was still thirsty for knowledge. It had been such a struggle to enter university, and I wanted to disprove the theory that one of the main objectives of a girl entering this formerly male-only domain was to find a husband. I was anxious to set a high moral standard and to avoid scandal. Naturally, we were all young, and it would be hypocritical of me to deny that some of the boys were interested in me, even hoping to "win my hand." Generally I managed to pretend ignorance when someone made social overtures, but I must also admit that I did feel a soft spot towards some of them. In most cases the criteria were not suitable for me to risk giving up my liberty. My heart was at that time set on the chances of further study, as I was most anxious to eventually make a useful contribution to society. I shall not embarrass anyone, or myself, by elaborating further.

As a general rule, we were a friendly group of student brethren, a situation that has happily lasted to the present day. While we were still

at university together, the boys would often invite me to tea at the Students' Union, where we usually gathered in small groups. At other times I would return the courtesy. Even for interfaculty football matches, we girls were expected to go out and cheer for our team. When there were Students' Union or Arts Association functions we were, of course, expected to pull our weight in helping with the preparations. If any of the men's hostels held their annual dance, we would naturally be invited. As a rule, we would dance with whoever asked us, without discrimination.

In later years, we kept up the firm friendships struck at HKU. If any student had left Hong Kong, I would visit them in, say, Shanghai or several of the Malayan peninsula cities. They and their families would generally host me. After the Falls, our new house at the Peak, was built, some of our local group suggested that I should ask them all home for tea, and I gladly obliged. Many of those living elsewhere sent me Christmas or New Year greetings to which I generally replied. When World War II ended and I returned to Hong Kong, we all felt fortunate to be alive. This heightened our appreciation of friendship, so I became the linchpin in organising those of us still living in the territory into a group once more. These meetings, at which we exchanged reminiscences of days gone by, seemed to rejuvenate us. The roots of these friendships date from the time when we were all considerably younger and on the threshold of our lives and careers. However, I have found that relationships built at that time are often the most lasting. I know that my old university friends have helped me through thick and thin and, indeed, have given me some of the happiest personal associations I have had in life. Several of my contemporaries are still alive, and it gives me great pleasure that we can keep in touch with each other from time to time.

Despite my resolve to avoid any romantic involvement during my university days, I had not reckoned what effect I might have upon others and how they would respond. Close proximity and similar interests can stimulate the attraction of one person for another, as I was to find out. When we first entered HKU, notices would be regularly issued by the Students' Union and signed by the chairman or by the secretary, M.K. Yue, both of whom belonged to the medical faculty. I think it was Wei Tat, another president scholar, who told me that M.K. Yue had been a "President Scholar" when he matriculated. This meant

that he was the candidate of Chinese nationality who had won highest marks in that examination, an achievement that impressed us all. Although he was a medical student, M.K.'s command of English had to be good and his general popularity among the students excellent to enable him to run for and be elected to the post of Students' Union secretary.

I had met M.K. a couple of times during the academic year 1921-22, but we seldom saw each other again because the following year he was in his fifth and final year at medical school. Medical students had to spend that year at the Government Civil Hospital as ward clerks in the various specialities. However, our paths did occasionally cross when his hostel, May Hall, held its annual dance or whenever there was a Students' Union function. M.K. would often be there among his fellow students. Not that I noticed him, because to me he was just one of the students about whom I thought highly—and no more than that. Little did I realise then that because we girls were so conspicuous thanks to our scarcity, he was taking more than a passing interest in me.

In the summer of 1923, after M.K. Yue graduated with the medicine and surgery degree, he went home to visit his folks in Putien, Fukien province. However, because he had done exceptionally well in his exams, he was able to secure a job as house surgeon at the teaching hospital in Hong Kong the following academic year (1923-24), which gave him a good opportunity to improve his skills. One morning that year the weather was bad, so instead of walking down Hatton Road as we usually did, Eva and I took the Peak tram and then a taxi to get to the university. While we were driving along busy Queen's Road West, a young girl of about nine ran across the road in front of our taxi, which unavoidably knocked her down. I was terribly scared for fear that she might be dead, but our driver, who had immediately jumped out to attend to her, said that the child was simply injured. Eva and I told him to drive us and the girl to the Government Civil Hospital, and coincidentally it was Dr Yue who received and treated her. He told us that although she had a small fracture, she would be well enough to go home again in less than a fortnight. When we went to fetch her after two weeks, we found her much better. After this incident, I was all the more impressed not just with western medicine, but also with the skills of Dr Yue.

Eddie graduated in the summer of 1924, and there was a large party given for him at Idlewild to which he was allowed to invite his

friends. Dr Yue was among them. It turned out to be quite a jolly party, and we danced well into the evening so that the gathering broke up quite late. Everyone had a good time, but many of Eddie's friends had not known each other until that night. Some came from conservative families, so they were well behaved, for Chinese people did not flirt in public. By then the Marble Sitting Room had had its flooring changed from large marble slabs to a wooden parquet floor. I remember Lady Margaret coming down the next day and announcing that she had found several dozen cigarette burns on the floor.

As Dr Yue's position as house surgeon also ended that summer, he went home to his native village. Shortly afterwards, his parents arranged his engagement to a certain Miss Liu, although I did not hear about this until many years later. I was not to see the young doctor again for some time because as soon as he graduated he was offered a position with St Luke's, the missionary hospital in Putien where his father had trained. In fact it had been the Chinese Medical Society Mission that had originally noticed M.K. as a promising young student and sent him to St Stephen's College in Stanley on Hong Kong Island, which was a private secondary school for boys. While there he won the president's scholarship, which enabled him to enter HKU.

Eventually, after he had spent a couple of years at Putien following his graduation, the mission sent the youthful Dr Yue to England, where he would take a diploma in public health at Cambridge. The first step of the long journey was to board a ship in Hong Kong, so he again returned to the territory. I had casually heard that M.K. was in town, but did not do anything about it. However, quite by chance we "bumped into each other" at the Star Ferry wharf. Hong Kong was then still a very small place and one frequently ran into friends or acquaintances on an almost daily basis. We had time for only a short exchange of generalities, mostly catching up with recent news. I remember he told me he had been invited by his alma mater, St Stephen's, to attend their prize ceremony and to give out the prizes before he sailed for Europe. Finally we wished each other well. I suppose I said to him *bon voyage* or something equally innocuous, then we each went our separate ways. It was not until 1932, when we again met accidentally in London, that he reminded me about that chance Star Ferry meeting. He also told me that on board the ship some of his fellow passengers kept singing "lovesick songs" that disturbed his peace of mind. But that is another part of the story.

## SEVEN

# A Grand Tour of China

**W**hile my mind was focused on a university education and my academic pursuits, our family's life continued as ever. I had been helping Mamma do her household accounts from 1918 until 1923-24, but I found this was interfering with the heavy workload I encountered during my latter years at university. Since Jean had finished her studies at DGS, I asked her to take over my housekeeping duties, which she duly did over the next couple of years. Jean had her problems, however, and at that time was suffering from headaches as a result of a bump on the head she received after being run down by a bicycle a decade earlier. Even before she left DGS at the end of 1923, the headaches were becoming unbearable. Her physician recommended a surgical operation to remove a bony lump that had grown behind her ear and was thought to be causing the headaches; this procedure, however, was not considered urgent.

Anyway, Jean soon had to go to Shanghai, where she would be a bridesmaid at Daisy's wedding. It was to be a modern Chinese ceremony instead of a western-style one like Vic's wedding. This was considered appropriate, given that Daisy's in-laws, the Au-Yang family, were Cantonese residing in Hankow. Both families went to Shanghai for the wedding ceremony. The bridegroom's family stayed in a hotel while my parents, Daisy, and Jean all stayed at our family mansion in Seymour Road, Shanghai. Mamma had known Daisy's future father-in-law, Au-Yang Wei-chang, since 1892, when our maternal grandfather was on his death bed. Au-Yang had been a private student of Grandfather's and had kindly gone to help look after him when he was sick and failing.

When Mamma met Mr Au-Yang again during one of her trips to

central China, they sealed their family relationships by arranging Daisy's betrothal to Pak-cheong, eldest son of Mr Au-Yang, so that the two families would become chin-jia. My family naturally added a few pieces of jewellery to those Daisy already possessed—together with other gifts—as a dowry, while the father-in-law's family also brought other pieces for his future daughter-in-law to celebrate the happy union of the two families. After the wedding, Daisy went back to Hankow with her husband's family and lived in the large family mansion there. Mamma also sent her faithful servant Oi Jie, who had so devotedly looked after Florence in her infancy, to be with the new bride as her personal amah, known in Cantonese as a Gun Sun (or Jin Xin in Mandarin).

Daisy's father-in-law had an older wife who was the natural mother of the bridegroom and also of his elder sister and younger brother. Although she was more or less retired, she became attached to Daisy and was most kind to her. Among other members of the household was a Third Mistress, the second concubine, who acted as housekeeper to the family and was also the mother of quite a few younger children. Unfortunately for Daisy, within a few years of her marriage first her father-in-law and later her husband both passed away. However, in accordance with Chinese manners and customs, Daisy at first stayed on in the in-law's household with the amah as her constant companion, adviser, and assistant. Many years later, Eddie's widow, Mordia, told me that some time after the husband's death, Mamma arranged to have Daisy live with Eddie and his wife in Father's large house in Shanghai. These must have been sad times for Daisy, as she spent most of her days in the garden trying to do something constructive with the plants and shrubs, though not very successfully.

Later still, Daisy developed chest trouble. When it did not clear up easily, Oi Jie took her to a nursing home run by our eminent medical cousin, Dr Man Wong, and his wife Alice. She was also a qualified doctor, having obtained her medical degree at the Sun Yat-sen Medical College in Guangzhou. After a few months at the nursing home, Daisy's chest got better and the trouble with her lungs cleared up. Alice later told us that it was the news of Robbie's forthcoming wedding in the summer of 1928 that gave Oi Jie the opportunity of informing Daisy's mothers-in-law that Daisy would be going to Hong Kong to attend the wedding of her younger brother. I still have one of Robbie's wedding photos in which Daisy is portrayed wearing some of her jewelled finery. She was in the second row to the left of the main bridal group. With

Daisy already at home—especially since Mamma was then still alive and living in a large house, the Falls—the logical move was to have Daisy stay there indefinitely.

Early in 1924, Father was asked to be one of the commissioners for the Hong Kong section of the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, London. Lady Margaret felt that it would be a good opportunity to show the world the whole intricate process of silk production in operation, from silk worm egg to the spun material. She arranged to take a group of her silk workers from Shun Tak to run the exhibit. They took Mary, our Third Sister and daughter of Father's concubine, and about a dozen silk workers along with them. Mostly women, some of these workers were the sisters or other relatives of Lady Margaret's amah, Kui Cheh. There was much publicity surrounding the event, and Queen Mary, wife of King George V, was said to have shown keen interest. We even heard that the organisers had considerable difficulty finding enough mulberry leaves to feed the silkworms and had to rush some in from Italy for the purpose.

Father and Lady Margaret lived in a rented house in London. Mamma felt that as Eddie had planned to go to England to join them as soon as he had obtained his university degree, it would be wiser for Jean to travel with him and have her operation in London. After cables had been sent back and forth, Eddie and Jean sailed for the United Kingdom in June 1924. Jean soon had her operation and was fortunate in having the attention of Mary Peters, her nurse, when she was convalescing. Some years later in London, I too came to know Miss Peters quite well, professionally as well as personally. Eddie arranged to undertake some postgraduate studies at the London School of Economics and later took up employment with Guarantee Trust while attending evening classes. In this way he was able to remain independently in London when Father, Lady Margaret, Mary, and Jean all went back to Hong Kong.

During 1924 and 1925, I was busy with the third and fourth years of my studies at The University of Hong Kong. Throughout most of our four and a half years at the university, we invariably walked down Hattan Road instead of taking the Peak tram. It was a more direct and much healthier way to get there than the tram ride. We would take our private rickshaws from the top of our hill, pass the upper terminal of the Peak tram, and continue along Harlech Road until it joined Hattan Road where it starts downhill as a regular road, though without much motor traffic. One of the lecturers—Mr Birch, who taught me first-year

English—and Miss Rachel Irving, the first girl to be admitted to the university, also walked down from the Peak, and sometimes we would meet each other on the way. Around that time in 1925 (fortunately during the holidays when we were in our final year) there were some political troubles in the form of an extensive seaman's strike that spread from Guangzhou to Hong Kong. The action eventually became a general strike affecting all domestic workers, even if they did not belong to a union. The labour unions were beginning to find their strength and, as our servants had been told not to work, our siblings all tried to do whatever they could to compensate for their inactivity. The university had already started its summer holidays, and after a few weeks the strike just petered out. My classmates and I had taken our final exams by the end of 1925, and in January 1926 we all attended the graduation ceremony—a little saddened to be leaving our beloved university, but excited by the prospect of what the future would bring.

It was during the summer of 1925 that our cousin, Ho Cheuk, the seventh son of Third Uncle Ho Fook, contracted blackwater fever and after a short illness died. He had been the assistant comprador of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, working directly under Brother Wing, who was then comprador. One day I heard Mamma ask Brother Wing to send a wire to Father in England asking him to recommend a successor for cousin Ho Cheuk's job. Wing said that perhaps it was unnecessary to bother Father about such a matter. But Mamma insisted, saying that as Father was the position's guarantor, he should be informed. She felt Father would understand that she hoped Eddie would be sent back to take up the job.

Indeed, Father did understand and spoke to Eddie. Unexpectedly, Eddie then confessed he had recently and secretly married an Irish girl. Father and Lady Margaret were furious. I remember seeing the letter that Lady Margaret had written in Chinese, telling Mamma about the matter and asking her to stand with them in not recognising the marriage. Mamma was heartbroken. Her darling son and favourite child had set himself against her husband to whom she was devoted. As she could not decide what to do, she asked Uncle Ho Fook for advice, as she often did when she had a problem. Both Uncle and Auntie Ho Fook had a special relationship with Eddie: when he had been sick as a baby, they had asked Mamma to bring him to live in their home. Also when Father was seriously ill, Uncle Ho Fook religiously went up to the Peak on Sunday mornings to visit us and to enquire after his



brother's health. Therefore when Mamma was presented with this latest dilemma, it was natural that she would turn to a close and rather special brother-in-law.

I remember the day Eddie arrived home from London after journeying by train across Siberia. Mamma, Uncle Ho Fook, and Eddie were closeted behind closed doors for more than an hour. They tried to persuade Eddie to take them into his confidence and help find a solution to the impasse. Eddie was adamant and would not even divulge anything about his marital life. He had, it seems, decided to lead his own life, at least with regard to his choice of partner. Weeks later, it was revealed that at the same time Eddie was making his way home via Russia, his wife, Mordia, was travelling to Hong Kong by boat. He arranged with his good friends, Dr and Mrs Thomas, to let her stay with them. Every time Eddie came home, Mamma became terribly upset, and once or twice she actually fainted with the emotional strain.

Years before, Mamma had promised to travel to England with Eva and me when we finished our schooling. Although we had managed to graduate from The University of Hong Kong (HKU), we were not content to end our studies at that stage and remained thirsty for more learning. Therefore it was decided that I should wait until Eva was ready to travel at the end of 1926 before we made the overseas trip, so I spent a year just marking time. However, in the end, it turned out to be quite an interesting twelve months. From the outset, I spent a great deal of time in the HKU library browsing through books and reading those that really interested me. One of my favourites was written by Prof Cyril Burt: it was entitled "The Young Delinquent," and I had previously studied it before my graduation. I borrowed it again and reread it thoroughly; it is one of the few books that I have ever read cover to cover twice. The author had taken 99 cases of delinquent young people, mostly teenage boys and a few girls, and made a case study of each one. Many years later, I was sad and disappointed to hear that Prof Burt had been discredited. I had liked him very much, both from his book and through his lectures on education psychology in 1927, which I attended every Wednesday morning for a year at the London Day Training College for the secondary teachers' training course.

Two of my former professors of Chinese history and Chinese philosophy at HKU, together with several other Chinese scholars, organised the Hok Hoi Library (literally, the "Library of the Ocean of

Learning"). In time it acquired a good selection of books on classical Chinese studies. Both my professors and the other scholars were enthusiastic and energetic people. They started a whole series of lectures that were held every Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday afternoon. These sessions dwelt on topics concerning various branches of classical studies—such as philosophy (the *Book of Changes*), history, poetry, or other literary masterpieces—and I attended these lectures two or three afternoons a week for quite some time.

Dr Lai Chi-hsi was the library's Director, and he had an office there. He was often asked by friends and students to exercise his calligraphic skills, either on a scroll or fan, and I also begged him to write something for me. He kindly wrote me a fan. I loved to watch him execute the work, as he was such an expert in calligraphy. However, I could not help noticing that he often made little mistakes, such as omitting a word here or there. When he noticed an error he would put two little dots at the side of the offending place and then make an amendment at the end of the passage. Dr Lai was one of a handful of contemporaries who had earned a Han Lin degree, a high academic honour, and he generally lectured on some aspect of Chinese history. Dr Au Tai-tin, another Han Lin scholar and professor of Chinese classics at HKU, lectured at the Hok Hoi Library on parts of the *Book of Changes*. Mr Yu Suk-man, yet another scholar, was the headmaster and owner of a private Chinese school and used to lecture on poetry. About three or four dozen people (and sometimes more) would come and listen to these free lectures, which were of exceedingly good quality and delivered by dedicated experts.

I should add here a note about the Hok Hoi Library books. During the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong in World War II, someone—perhaps a member of the Confucian Academy—managed to save those valuable books from harm. Eventually, the Academy obtained land from the government to erect a new building for its school and developed it into a group of four Tai Shing schools located at the Wong Tai Sin resettlement area in Kowloon. These included a secondary school on the two upper floors and three primary schools (morning, afternoon, and evening) on the two lower floors. There was a common assembly hall on the ground floor. I was later appointed as the first principal of the secondary school and also nominal principal of the three primary schools in their dealings with the Education Department of the Hong Kong government.

The building plans provided a fairly large room for the library. It had an inner store room, and the many books from the former Hok Hoi Library were kept there. When I was principal, the library was open to scholars who wanted to study the books or undertake some research. The original Hok Hoi Library was situated on a terrace near Idlewild, but at that time I was not living there. From Idlewild one could go down Seymour Road a short distance and then turn west into Bonham Road past the Nethersole Hospital, a well-known charitable institution originally established by one of the first British knights of Chinese origin, Sir Kai Ho-kai. Crossing the bottom of a steep hill and then up a flight of steps, one would reach the terrace on which the Chinese library was situated. At the western end of the terrace lived the mother of my future sister-in-law, Hesta Hung.

Hesta's mother, a kindly old lady, was like an auntie to us. After my lectures I would often drop in to see her, since her son was a good friend of my younger brother Robbie. Hesta had been a schoolmate of my sister Jean and a boarder at Diocesan Girls' School, so I did not see or meet her at that time. However, she had a younger sister, gentle and kind, named Phyllis whom I particularly liked. I remember that the old lady used to rear chickens in her back yard, and she managed to fatten them very well. She also employed an excellent amah cook, who no doubt worked wonders with the chickens. I would sometimes drop in at tea-time after my lectures for a short chat with a very pleasant and hospitable mother and daughter.

During that year, before I left with Eva and Mamma for London, I also studied with our Chinese teacher at home. I would sometimes ask him to explain a passage of Chinese literature from a book called *Collected Old Literature*, the *Goo Man* (Cantonese) or *Goo Wen* (Mandarin), which was studied extensively in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and mainland China before 1949. I might discuss with him some points arising from the Hok Hoi Library lectures, or at other times I would practice calligraphy, an art in which he was expert. He was still living in our house in 1925, serving as Mamma's secretary and accountant. Of course he was glad if any of us wanted to tap his knowledge or attend some lessons with him. So all in all, I kept myself pretty busy that year, studying, reading, and occasionally going swimming with family or friends.

By that time we had already given up trying to learn the violin because it was almost impossible to keep it in tune. I honestly did not

have time to practice and was not really that interested because the climate at the Peak was not favourable for the maintenance of violin strings, which frequently snapped. There was a lot to do at home anyway. One of the jobs was to keep Mamma's accounts. She had a little cupboard, to which I had the key, where she kept a small amount of ready cash. If she took money out for any kind of purchase, I would jot down the amount in a little housekeeping notebook.

About once every two weeks, the family accountant would go from Idlewild up to the Peak and stay the night there. That was when we disbursed all the salaries and wages, except those of the chair and rickshaw coolies. The latter were paid according to the solar calendar, while other members of staff were paid by the lunar calendar and thus received a wage or salary 13 times a year when there was an intercalary month. The chair and rickshaw coolies catered for themselves; partly for this reason, we paid them a different scale of wages than the rest of the household. They also came from the remote native district of Hok Shan, spoke in a special dialect, and were physically much more robust and stronger than the other servants.

When she dealt with her own accounts, Mamma sometimes forgot to record them, so when the accountant came up each month he would help her to transcribe, record, combine, and check all the figures and then try to assess what the current balance should be. If there was a discrepancy, Mamma would gladly write out an order to draw money from her own account in order to make up the difference. She would not let these small imbalances bother her. As there were some other accounts she wanted to keep private, she would just ask us to write the difference down as her personal expenses.

The housekeeper, Leung Yee-goo (Second Auntie Leung), was one of the amahs who kept Mamma's petty cash and accounts. Every now and then Yee-goo would need more money, so Mamma or I would extract some cash from the little cupboard and enter it into the book so that Yee-goo could credit it to, and balance, her own account book. Yee-goo had small feet as a result of having had them bound, which ostensibly meant that she had come from a refined family, and she evidently had had quite a good Chinese education. Her small feet did not bother her at all. In rainy weather, if she had to cross from No 50 to the other house at No 49, she would simply take off her shoes and stockings, cover her head, and run across the tennis court between the two houses. At any rate, it was she whom Mamma selected to

accompany her to England.

When our maternal uncle went to north China and his home was broken up, Mamma asked Father to allow her the special privilege of moving her own Chang family ancestral tablets to be re-enshrined in our home. Consequently, as Mamma's housekeeper, I was responsible for the remembrance of all the anniversary memorial days that we celebrated. I reminded and supervised all staff at the Peak house to arrange for appropriate offerings for the anniversaries of the births and deaths of the Chang family ancestors. I also had to remind my siblings that they should visit Idlewild to pay their respects on Ho ancestral anniversaries. Once, when Jean and Grace were away at a beach party, I suddenly remembered that they had forgotten it was an anniversary day. Fortunately, I was able to get word to them to get up to Idlewild in time for the family dinner, as otherwise Lady Margaret would have been highly displeased at their lack of respect.

From time to time Mamma would take me with her to visit some elderly relative or friend, and sometimes she would ask me to go by myself. I went back to visit the family of the old headmaster of Sheung Fu Girls' School, Mr Lo, because Eva and I had come to know him and his family fairly well. While we were students at that school we used to stay in class to complete our homework until it was almost time to attend our class at the Technical Institute down the steep Aberdeen Street at Queen's College. The headmaster's entire family took part in teaching at Sheung Fu School. Even after we had left the school, if I was free on a schoolday after four o'clock or so, I would drop in to visit them. Their personal quarters and classrooms were upstairs, with the school office and our classroom downstairs. In those days almost all private schools were situated in tenement buildings with similar arrangements for teaching and living. I was particularly friendly with the headmaster's second daughter and daughter-in-law. Even the two old brothers were quite proud of the fact that Eva and I were their students when The University of Hong Kong admitted us as undergraduates. Incidentally, when I retired from the Education Department in 1961, old Mr Lo composed four poems and wrote them out in excellent calligraphy on bright red paper sprinkled with gold foil. The third of these poems proudly refers to the fact that Eva and I were their students and had entered university to further our studies.

Early in 1926, Mamma was ill with skin trouble. Eva, who was then a final-year medical student, got Dr K.C. Yeo to come and attend to

her. Dr Yeo, who had graduated the previous year, was then an intern in the Government Civil Hospital, a promising young doctor who was both patient and kind. Eva got to know Dr Yeo quite well, as we all did in the fullness of time. Mamma was ill for quite a while, so I seldom ventured out except for important matters. I still went to one or two lectures that year, but time passed quickly and eventually Mamma recovered.

Later, Mamma told me that she wanted to return several calls to a young woman from Macau, Miss Siu Wai-sheung, who considered Mamma her godmother. Wai-sheung was a very sociable person and had recently returned from America where she obtained a degree from one of the eastern women's colleges. Her father was the Director of a well-known Chinese theatre in Macau and Mamma had known him quite well. She loved Chinese opera and often travelled to Macau to see these shows. For about a week each year, they would be held under a shed in the open air opposite the Tin Hau (Goddess of the Sea) Temple, whose birthday they were celebrating. Normally performances were held in the Ching Ping Theatre, the best-known Chinese opera house in Macau. It was Mr Siu who arranged to give Mamma free tickets to his box, which seated several people, every time there was a theatrical show. If she decided to go over, she would take a few of us children along. That was a long, long time ago, during early summer holidays before we went to the Diocesan Girls' School in 1914. Mamma got to know the Siu family well. Although Miss Siu was not very good looking, she was extremely sociable to the point of being a complete extrovert. She knew how to get on in the world and Mamma was impressed by her energy and drive, indeed by her sheer love of life.

When her parents decided to let her go to America, Wai-sheung travelled to Hong Kong to catch the boat and at the same time let Mamma know she was leaving. This was because she regarded Mamma as her godmother and felt that she should be kept informed. Wai-sheung returned in 1925 and the next year, during Mamma's illness, visited her several times at the Peak. When Mamma had recovered satisfactorily, she decided to return Miss Siu's kindness and took me along with her to visit Wai-sheung, who also had a home in Hong Kong. Following the initial pleasantries upon our arrival, Mamma and Wai-sheung chatted for a while until this genial host turned and said: "By the way Irene, I'm going to Beijing this summer. Why don't you come along with me?" It seemed like a good idea, but I had to explain that Father might not give his approval. Mamma came to the rescue: "Never mind, I'll talk him into

it, Irene, because it's important that you see Beijing before all the palaces and other beautiful buildings fall into ruin. Some parts are already badly in need of repair, but Beijing is still well worth seeing." That was the beginning of a new adventure.

I later found that Mamma had been correct about conditions in Beijing. However, when I went back there in 1972, I found that the government had carefully repaired and renovated many of the splendid old palaces and historical buildings, but not without great difficulty. When it was decided to go ahead with these sometimes massive projects, the officials in charge could not at first find the craftsmen or skilled workers who really knew the job and who could be entrusted to carry out the delicate repairs. Finally they discovered a couple of elderly craftsmen who claimed that they could do it. The government then encouraged the old men to train a group of younger workmen in the various techniques. This was a wise policy that ensured a constant supply of younger craftsmen who could undertake the more difficult or intricate jobs.

As promised, Mamma did talk to Father, and he gave his blessing for me to accompany Wai-sheung on her journey. He said he would arrange a Letter of Credit for me so that I could always go to one of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank branches, which abounded throughout China, if I needed money. I think the credit was for HK\$2,000, which in those days would have been quite adequate for our planned trip of around three months. Of course I did not draw the full amount at once, only when I needed some cash for hotel bills, shopping, or other expenses. It really was a convenient and safe way of obtaining and carrying travel and holiday funds. This trip was one of the highlights of my life. It was a wonderful experience that I valued greatly, in the same way young people in England treasured their Grand Tour of Europe at a similar period in their lives. After the People's Republic of China was established, I was fortunate during the 1970s to be able to return to all the places I had enjoyed so much on my own Grand Tour of 1926.

From Shanghai, instead of going north by rail, we were advised to go by boat to Tsingtao, then to Dairen and Mukden. From Mukden we took a train straight to Tientsin (Tianjin), the port city for Beijing, with all its historical significance and somewhat westernised changes. We stayed at the Astor House Hotel in Tientsin for a week and were royally entertained by the M.T. Liang family. Old Mr Liang had the honour of having been one of the famous "120" students selected by the Chinese

Imperial Government in the middle of the 19th century and sent to the United States to study when they were still boys wearing pigtaails. Each year, for three years, 40 teenage students had been chosen by tests that purported to establish their native intelligence rather than scholarliness. The system lasted only for a few years and was subsequently discontinued. There were only a few of the "120" still alive in my younger days, but the Hon. Sir Shouson Chow of Hong Kong, who officiated at my wedding, was also one of them.

The M.T. Liang family in Tientsin impressed me considerably as it was such a diametrical contrast to the family atmosphere I was used to. Uncle Liang's only daughter, Grace, had recently returned from Mount Holyoke College in the United States, where she had been a real social hit. It was reported that at various conferences she attended, Grace would change into a different outfit of clothes, one each for morning, noon, and night. Like any young woman of her age and nature, she would lead her father to her room and proudly show him which pair of shoes matched which gown. She was not really extravagant, just full of life, bubbly, and attractive with a good sense of taste and an eye for pretty things.

The Liangs had six boys and Grace was the sixth child, so her parents—and especially her father—simply doted on her. I was astounded when I sat with all of them at mealtimes, hearing them argue or discuss matters with each other and with their father, as if they were all equals. Of course, we had grown up in an entirely different home atmosphere, where Father, because of his poor health, hardly ever ate with us, except for special Christmas lunches. Sometimes he would invite one or more of us over to the house where he lived and have a meal with him. He hardly ever took the same kind of food as we did. He existed on a diet consisting mainly of yoghurt, which his staff prepared for him. Father's long illness was partly due to a weakness in his digestive system, which could not assimilate the foodstuffs eaten by the rest of the family. And although we were free to discuss matters with Mamma, we always gave her due respect and seldom dared or even wished to argue with her.

Auntie Liang, the mother, was a real dear. Although they employed a regular cook, she was fond of and also very good at cooking certain dishes herself, so naturally I often found her in the kitchen. Later, when I lived and worked in Tientsin, I would occasionally drop in to visit them. On January 1, 1944, during a visit I found her in her usual domain and wished her Happy New Year in Chinese. Auntie Liang was



very conservative about such things and said: "New Year is not yet due. If you celebrate New Year twice in a year, you will soon be over 100 years old." Chinese increase their age by one year on Lunar New Year's Day, not on their birthday or on January 1, hence her remark seemed logical from her point of view.

When I first met this family, all the boys except the youngest one, Tommy, had been abroad to study. The eldest, P.K., had become an excellent surgeon; the second, Jack, an engineer; the third, P.T., was a physician; the fourth, William, died in the United Kingdom; and the fifth, P.P., was an ophthalmologist who worked at the Kailan Mines. Tommy, younger than Grace, was the only unmarried brother. As he was keen to become an artist, he maintained a large studio in the basement of the Liang's modern family home. Incidentally, a feature of this house was its beautiful sweeping staircase with wide sturdy steps.

To complete my rounds, I dutifully called on my parents' other friends of the same Chinese surname but spelt Leung in Cantonese fashion. Mr Leung Yim-hing, who was quite elderly, had a first wife who bore him his eldest son. Unfortunately, the son was later kidnapped and killed, leaving behind a widow and young daughter. This same daughter-in-law later befriended me when I too arrived in Tientsin as a widow with a dependent child and an amah from Hong Kong. Mrs Leung kindly allowed us to stay with her until the Kailan Mining Administration finally provided us with half a flat to share with my British colleague, Miss Binks.

Y.H. Leung had a third concubine (known as the Fourth Mistress) who really ran the household and bore him a number of children, some of whom later came to Hong Kong. Mamma was particularly friendly with this lady. Later, when I first started working in Tientsin in 1943, the Chinese currency was quickly being eroded by inflation. My friends advised me to borrow some money so that I could purchase some home necessities and perhaps a few personal things as well. I approached Mr Leung's concubine, who generously loaned me \$1,000 in Chinese currency for a year, which I repaid within the stipulated period. Taking inflation into account, I offered to repay her some more. But she generously waived the suggestion and accepted the depreciated value of the loan. All this was, of course, in the future.

After a week in Tientsin the three of us went on to Beijing. Shuping Kuai, a recent Oxford graduate whom Wai-sheung had persuaded to join us, stayed with her cousin, who was old enough to be her father but

behaved more like an uncle. Wai-sheung and I went to stay with Mrs T.K. Liang, wife of the Shanghai Commercial Bank manager, whose Travel Service had planned our journey. Mrs Liang, a good friend of Wai-sheung, was the eldest daughter-in-law of the famous Liang Shih-yi, who had held high official government positions, such as minister of finance. He used to commute between Beijing and Hong Kong, where his aged father lived with his fourth younger brother, Leung Kwai-din, and their families. The Hong Kong residence was large and consisted of two houses combined into one unit. They were joined back-to-back by a short flight of stairs. The upper level faced onto Conduit Road and the lower fronted Robinson Road.

I had been a classmate of one of the granddaughters of the old patriarch, Grandfather Liang, whose son visited him in Hong Kong from Beijing. The second grandson of the Liang family and his wife (who later became my sister-in-law), Mr and Mrs T.K. Liang, were both very kind to me. It was his colleagues at the Shanghai Commercial Savings Bank in Shanghai who had advised us to journey by boat to Tsingtao and Dairen and afterwards by train to Mukden, Tientsin, and Beijing. When we arrived in the Chinese capital, we stayed with T.K. Liang's wife, a jolly, extroverted woman and an exceedingly kind hostess who had also known Siu Wai-sheung in America. We made their large family mansion our base when we "Three Graces" went sightseeing in the capital.

There are many stories about Grandfather Liang, who was reputed to be an excellent scholar and teacher. He occupied a room next to the staircase near the front entrance of the house in Hong Kong so that he could monitor the comings and goings of the family. Each of his descendants had to go to his room every day to bid him good morning and ask after his health before he or she left home for the day's work or school. Mamma had a high opinion of this family and once took some of us to visit them. On that occasion I had the opportunity of seeing the "Grand Old Man," who was tall, slim, and upright although quite elderly. Now that one of his great-grandchildren, Mrs Sylvia Young (who now lives near me in San Diego and is a goddaughter of mine), has her own grandchildren, some of whom I have seen, I can tell her honestly that I have met six generations of her family. On the occasion that we met the old man, Mamma asked his son, the financier, to give us some good advice. I remember him telling us:

Don't be afraid of hard work. When we were young we lived in a village and our father employed a tutor to teach not only us, but some of the other village children as well. When Chinese New Year came around, the teacher would take his winter holiday, but father had already found a substitute instructor to continue the work, so we only had two days' holiday, the first and second days of Chinese Lunar New Year. The only time I can remember we had a real holiday was during the Ching Ming Festival, when all of us boys had to go with the grown-ups to visit each and every grave of our ancestors in the village, a task that could sometimes take 10 days!\* Those were the only days in the year that we had holidays. However, don't be afraid of studying too hard. You see, despite my having had to study so hard when I was young, I am still healthy and strong.

This is what the patriarch's son told us, and I shall never forget his good advice. In his day, probably because he was once minister of finance, he must have been a financial genius because everyone called him the "God of Wealth."

Mr Liang Shi-yi, T.K. Liang's father, was the patriarch's second son, and a truly devoted one. When the old grandfather was still alive, his household referred to him as the Second Young Master, and T.K. was called Second Grandson Master. In every way he strove to make his father comfortable and happy. Liang Shi-yi had a wife and several concubines. I had met the first wife, but did not know her as well as the first concubine, who was always called Number Two Concubine. A devout Buddhist, she was one of Mamma's staunch religious friends. In 1926, when I stayed in their Beijing mansion, this second concubine was probably staying in Hong Kong. The fourth concubine, who was already quite elderly and in poor health, lived in Beijing, so the financier decided to take in two younger concubines at about the same time. I think the sixth one lived in Beijing a good deal of the time, but the eighth one always travelled with the financier and was, in all probability, his favourite. I cannot remember the details of what happened to numbers three and five, but there never was a number seven because the mother of the financier was the seventh daughter of her own family, so they skipped that number.

\* It is true that in country villages only sons visit the tombs, but in Hong Kong, daughters usually go along as well.

At that time, around 1926, Mrs T. K. Liang had only two sons. The elder son Benny, born in 1920, was just six when I met him. Benny and I became great pals when I returned to Beijing in the autumn to investigate the prospects for my uncle's coal mining business. The family had a lovely, friendly greyhound dog. Benny and I decided that the animal, with such short hair, must feel quite cold, so I bought a small piece of woollen material, made a simple jacket for him, and then tied it together under his belly with tape. The second son was only a baby, so I did not have much to do with him, while the two daughters, Yvonne and Rosamund, whom I later knew quite well, were not yet born.

When Wai-sheung and I first arrived at the house, the financier was away. I well remember the stir it caused, with everyone on their toes, when he and his entourage came home. My late husband H.H. used to tell me that the financier, when he was prime minister, found that the affairs of state weighed so heavily on his shoulders that he just could not shake them off, even at weekends. But he was a keen mah-jong player, and as soon as he left his office every Saturday his family invited a group of friends to his home for lunch and a gambling session. In Beijing, as in Hong Kong, everyone worked a five and a half day week. The group would play cards interminably, adjourning only for meals, right through until Monday morning, when he went back to work and resumed his stately duties. The financier said he could not shake off his workload in any other way. On the other hand, I believe his friends had to take it in shifts over the weekend to keep up with him!

The financier's dwelling in Beijing was a typical old Chinese fortress of its day, with courtyard after courtyard, each with a central building facing south and generally two side ones facing east and west. Behind each set of buildings was another set, then another series farther in. This complex mansion lay within an ancient group of buildings in an old city street called Gan Shih Chiao (Sweet Stone Bridge). The house, of course, was well known to members of the large Liang family and their friends. Many years later, during one of my visits to Beijing, I took a taxi and searched for the dwelling. I found that it had eventually been sold to some Japanese people who were running it as a boarding house or some such use. I went in and found Japanese "tatami" mats laid on the floors for people to sleep on.

Wai-sheung and I lived in a building facing one of the courtyards, where an adjacent room was used by two young sons of the Fourth Uncle. I happened to know them, as they were the Eighth and

Ninth Younger Brothers who used to go with their Fifth Elder Sister (paternal cousin) to the Sheung Fu Girls' School. In those days the school admitted small boys to its lower classes. I was impressed that these two could already speak fluent Mandarin, although they had been in northern China for only a couple of years. I was determined to try and learn the language as soon as I had the opportunity and eventually did so when in Britain and America, mostly by practicing speaking with fellow students from northern China whose mother tongue was Putonghua (Mandarin).

When Wai-sheung and I mentioned that we and Shuping planned to go sightseeing in Beijing by ourselves, our hosts were sceptical, particularly as we did not know our way around—and of the three of us, only Shuping could speak Mandarin. It simply was not appropriate in those days for three young ladies to go gallivanting around Beijing. They expressed this opinion to Wai-sheung quite frankly, when suddenly Mrs Liang came up with a solution. Mrs Liang's third younger brother, H.H. Tseng (or Cheng), who had trained in Japan as a mining engineer, was living at her home for a while and working as the assistant manager of a new shop that their father had recently opened. The shop was something similar to a Woolworth's store—with goods costing \$1, 50c, or 10c—and was called, rather appropriately, the One-Five-One Company. Mrs Liang's idea was for H.H. to take time off from the store and escort us three young ladies wherever we wanted to go during the two weeks we would be spending in Beijing. Everyone thought this was the solution to the problem, and H.H.'s father approved the arrangement.

Consequently every day we had an escort. Taxis were easily available and we could pick Shuping up from where she was staying with her cousin before visiting all the various places of interest. We went to palaces, museums, and temples, just the same as tourists often do today, and we went to famous restaurants where we tried all the provincial tastes and flavours in turn. Part of the time was spent browsing around the shops, especially those selling silks, porcelain, cloisonné work, books, paintings, or *objets d'art*. Sometimes we would make a major purchase, especially Wai-sheung, who was an avid, but careful, spender. She also had a shop in Hong Kong where she could sell some of her bargain purchases. Beijing, in those days, was a shopper's paradise.

I remember that when we were there in 1926, it was customary

for the gateman at the Liang mansion to be given a commission by the shop, whatever our purchases may have been, even when we went shopping by taxi and brought the goods home ourselves. He lived and worked in a little building at the main entrance of the estate. Of course, if we had asked the shopkeepers to deliver the goods we could more easily have understood the arrangement, but evidently the taxi drivers had been told to report back when we had gone home and the shopkeepers would know to whom the commission was due. People talk of the bribery and corruption that existed in traditional Beijing, and this was a typical example. The shopkeepers knew the system and willingly paid up.

One day we received a letter from our friend, Grace Liang of Tientsin. She asked how the "Three Graces" were getting along in Beijing, told us she was thinking of spending a fortnight at the seaside resort of Peitaiho (now Beidahe), and asked if we would like to join her. We discussed the matter among us, with H.H. adding that we had actually seen all we possibly could in Beijing during our two-week stay. Places outside the city were either "out of bounds" or unsafe during those troubled times. One day around noon we actually heard the sounds of gunfire outside the city, denoting that the warlords were battling it out against each other. H.H. mentioned that his mother was then staying in their Peitaiho summer house, so he would welcome the opportunity of escorting us there and visiting his mother at the same time.

H.H. had had a fourth younger sister who died shortly before our arrival. As a result their mother, who was very sad at losing her youngest child, had decided to live for a while in their house at the seaside resort in order to recuperate. Consequently, we accepted Grace Liang's invitation and readied ourselves for our next big adventure at Peitaho. Just before we left, we discovered that it would be Mrs T.K. Liang's birthday on the day of our departure, an event she intended to celebrate at her maternal home in Beijing. I was sorry that we would all miss the party, but I bought a small gift that I left behind for her. We said goodbye to all our friends in Beijing and set off that morning on the next stage of our journey.

The train taking us towards Tientsin had been going for about an hour when it suddenly came to a stop in the middle of nowhere. We could not discover the reason for this unexpected delay, and after a while it began to annoy Wai-sheung and Shuping. I tried to stay calm

and make the best of it, but was disappointed later when I learned that the train would have to return to Beijing. Afterwards we were told that it had been deemed dangerous for the train to proceed because there had been some rioting at Lang Fang, farther down the line. Actually I was rather pleased at the outcome because the delay enabled us to attend Mrs Liang's birthday party. We had already met most of the members of her family, including her eldest uncle and aunt and their children. Their son was a German-trained medical practitioner.

During that unscheduled stay in Beijing, Mrs Liang attempted to educate me about their proud descent from a great statesman, the Imperial Commissioner Lin Tse Hsu (Lin Jexu), who was her and H.H.'s great great-grandfather. I was quite impressed at the time, but it was not until many years later that I came to appreciate the full significance of this famous family, most of whose descendants still exude great pride in their relationship to such an illustrious ancestor. It was Commissioner Lin, of course, who had stopped the opium trade in Southern China by confiscating the raw substance from the Chinese and Western merchants who were illegally trading in that death-dealing drug. He had it all burned and even flushed the ashes out to sea. Unfortunately, the British sent in their gunboats to protect their merchants, and China lost the notorious First Opium War. Lin was banished to Sinkiang (now Xinjiang) province in the northwest for a number of years but was later pardoned and reappointed to his former office. However, it was an appointment that he was destined never to take up because he died before reaching home.

Understandably, his descendants were fiercely proud to claim their lineage from this national hero. H.H., his parents and siblings, and many of his other relatives would tell me about their famous family heritage. They would describe their cousins' parties, generally held once a year in Shanghai, where as many descendants of Lin as possible would gather. These events were usually recorded by them having a group photograph taken. I was quite intrigued, and possibly more interested in the family's history, because of its illustrious heritage. People interested in modern eugenics might strongly disapprove of the way such families as the famous Lin clan would often arrange marriages between cousins. However, the habit was once widely practiced in Chinese society, where people were genuinely proud and happy to reinforce their family connections by such intermarriage. They call it "relationship on top of relationship." For this reason, a family tree is still the best way of

illustrating the inter-relationships of the many persons concerned.

The morning after our abortive attempt to leave Beijing, we boarded the train once again and arrived at Tientsin safely and on time. Grace was there to meet us at the station and took us to the family mansion where we stayed the night. The next morning we made our way to Peitaho where we were to spend a most enjoyable two weeks. We rented two rooms at the beach-front hotel in Peitaho and drew lots to decide who would room with whom. I drew Grace as my roommate, and from that beginning we became close friends for the rest of our lives. H.H. stayed with his mother but came over to be with us most days. He was very shy and paid most of his attention to Wai-sheung, the most senior member of our group. Shuping and I both enjoyed swimming and tried to teach Grace, Wai-sheung, and H.H. how to swim. They all enjoyed frolicking in the water, but there was not enough time for any of them to become proficient swimmers.

Besides swimming, we also rode donkeys. One day Wai-sheung fell off her mount and hurt herself slightly, gaining a few bruises. However, the resourceful H.H. was able to find her a Japanese masseuse who took care of the injury. I assumed the task of keeping account of the stacks of laundry we sent out every day. The prices were not high, but I enjoyed charging my companions for what the laundry shop had washed for each us. During the last few days at Peitaho we did not send any laundry out. That meant we had to arrange for our dirty things to be washed when we went to stay in the Liang home for a couple of days until our boat sailed for home. I remember it rained every day and the servants had to hang out dozens of laundry items, especially Shuping's many large handkerchiefs, all along the railing of the broad staircase, down two flights to the ground floor, and back up the other railing again.

As we made our way back to Tientsin by train on the 16th day of the seventh moon, I realised that it was the anniversary of our maternal grandmother P'aw P'aw's birthday, and Mamma would be feeling sad at her passing. I suppose I was quite homesick thinking of Mamma that day, and I sat in a reflective mood on the top step of the train where there was a nice breeze. After some time, H.H. followed me outside and came to talk with me. I explained to him about my grandmother's anniversary and how it had made me think of home. He was very understanding and after chatting for a while quietly returned to the carriage.



I realised at the time that H.H. was interested in me. However, we were both shy and since I had made plans to go to England the following year, I had no intention of settling down just yet. Therefore I gave him no encouragement whatsoever and just treated him as a good friend. As soon as we reached Tientsin he went straight back to Beijing on the same train. Within a few days, of course, I would be returning to Hong Kong. I never dreamt then that I would soon be going back to Beijing for several months and soliciting H.H.'s help, purely on a voluntary basis, to investigate a primitive coal mining venture into which my maternal Uncle Gai had dragged Father, albeit unintentionally.

Returning home, we just reversed our itinerary, first going by boat from Tientsin to Tsingtao. Leaving Tsingtao, we eventually found ourselves back aboard ship heading for Shanghai, where we would stay another couple of days before embarking on another packet for Hong Kong. Father's business associate in Tsingtao, Mr Ho Wing-sang, came to see us off. Just as our ship was moving away from the quayside, he called out rather indistinctly that Uncle Ho Fook had died in Hong Kong, but said he was not quite sure of the news. I wanted to find out more details and so felt sad and tried to confirm Mr Ho's half-message by checking the English-language papers carried aboard for more details. I found none, nothing at all, until we reached Shanghai and sought confirmation from Uncle Ho Fook's son-in-law, Mr Arthur Waller, a Eurasian working at Kelly and Walsh's. He said that the news was indeed true and that his wife had already gone home for the funeral. I decided that I must get to Hong Kong as soon as I could book passage, but as there were no vessels for another ten days or so, Wai-sheung persuaded me to go with her to Hangzhou and Suzhou in central China. Thus ended a pleasant summer tour of almost three months, one of the most memorable activities in my whole life.

As a matter of interest, Grace Liang later went to live in Shanghai, where both she and Shuping Kuai became headmistresses of well-known schools: Grace at the Shanghai Municipal Council Secondary School and Shuping at the Besant Girls' School, which was run by a religious group. When I returned to Shanghai in 1937 after my studies abroad and needed some Chinese clothes, Grace helped me buy the materials and find a tailor whom she supervised in making the garments. A few years later, when she decided to get married to her good friend, Dan Yapp of Honolulu, she asked me to be her bridesmaid. Grace found a beautiful piece of embroidered brocade, like those found

on old ceremonial gowns, and then bought a superb piece of yellow silk to match. These she gave to my tailor who made up a gown which, after the wedding, I wore as my best party dress for several years. Grace later went to Taiwan and then to Hong Kong where she did some excellent work, first teaching English at the government secondary school for girls, the Belilios Public School. Afterwards she was selected by the Department of Education and the principal of Grantham Training College to become warden of its women students' hostel. Simultaneously, she instructed the Grantham students in the teaching of English and in both of these responsibilities had remarkable success.

About the time I was on holiday in China, our maternal Uncle Gai was becoming involved in a mining venture some miles outside Beijing, in a hilly district called Men Tou Kou where the coal was hard anthracite that burned with little smoke. When Uncle originally tried to persuade Father to take up the matter, Father initially refused to get involved with the venture since he knew nothing about mining. However, Uncle was persistent and Father finally agreed to lend him some money, but only on the condition that Uncle would not say anything about Father's connection with the undertaking. Uncle Gai, a gregarious man who loved to brag, unfortunately could not refrain from assuring his associates that he had "strong backing" in Hong Kong. The cat was out of the bag.

As I mentioned, during 1926 the warlords were fighting each other near Beijing and had commandeered all the railway trucks to move their troops, so there were no wagons left to transport the coal from Uncle Gai's mining venture. The "black gold" was just left stacked up near the mine, as I saw with my own eyes. The stockpile affected the large Sino-British mining firm, McBain's, as well as smaller Chinese mining undertakings. Consequently, all the railway schedules were disrupted, and the little coal that was then being produced in the area could not be transported elsewhere for sale. Without any cash flow, there was no capital to pay for the labour and materials needed to keep the (mostly primitive) pits in safe working order. Uncle ran up a hefty deficit. Since the person dealing with him, Mr Li, could not get the money out of Uncle, he wrote directly to Father, saying that if the debts were not paid within a certain length of time he would have no alternative but to take the matter to court.

Father received this letter a couple of weeks after I returned to

Hong Kong and discussed it with Mamma. Between them they decided that since I had just returned from Beijing and had friends there, the best thing was to send me back to investigate the matter. I pointed out that I had no knowledge of mining nor of any other kind of business venture. I was told that all I had to do was determine the true state of affairs at the mine and report back to Father, then he would tell me what to do next. I was given no alternative and simply had to obey. However, Father had a good friend, Dr Liu Yuk-lin, the first Chinese Minister in London, whose son, Arthur Liu, was a Beijing mining engineer trained in Scotland. Dr Liu was visiting Arthur in Beijing, so I was given a letter of introduction to him.

When I eventually reached Beijing to do Father's bidding and find out what was going on at the mine, I again stayed with those genial hosts, Mr and Mrs T.K. Liang, in their large family mansion in Gan Shih Chiao. My recent escort and travelling companion, H.H. Cheng, was still staying there and he offered to help me in his spare time from his job as assistant manager of his father's 10 cents store. The fact that he had previously studied mining engineering in Japan would be an additional asset.

Armed with Father's letter of introduction, I called on Dr Liu in Beijing early one morning. He confirmed that his son Arthur worked in the Sino-British Mine at Men Tou Kou and came home every weekend. H.H. and I met Arthur at his home where he described conditions at the mine. A day or so after that, I ordered a car and drove over some very bumpy, unpaved country roads up to the mine. Then, and every Saturday following, we would visit Arthur at his home in the afternoon and debrief him about the week's events at the mine. Arthur Liu kindly spent much of his own time giving us a clearer picture of the mining business in the area and the difficulties it was then facing. Basically, the story was that due to the unavailability of railway transport, even the Sino-British Mine had to stockpile coal around the site, in much the same way as Uncle's mine.

The Sino-British Mine was a large modern operation, with up-to-date equipment and methods, even though it was located at Men Tou Kou. This was in direct contrast to the Chinese mines in the area, where men would crawl into the extremely narrow, low cuttings with an empty basket on their shoulders and emerge with a full one. The large "foreign" mine, as the local people called it, did not bother with the superficial layers or intermediate strata, which contained relatively little coal. Even in the lower layers, they ignored smaller quantities that

they considered uneconomical to recover. This was not the case with the Chinese mining operations, and the Ministry of Mines had granted mining rights to local Chinese people who applied to work the coal seams that existed around the foreign mine. Some of these local mines were subdivided into a number of pitheads. Uncle had procured the rights to two of these that were in operation and to the Tien Fu mine, which had not yet been worked.

The recognised practice of working these pitheads sounded almost ludicrous to me. We were told that the miners dug shafts that were not very high, so they had to crawl in with a wicker basket. Whatever coal they found, they could keep. If two of these miners met underground and there was some coal available, whoever got there first would be entitled to keep his find. But if both arrived about the same time, they would have a fight and whoever won the battle would gain title to the coal. This all sounds exceedingly primitive, but it was nevertheless the situation in 1926. H.H. actually braved this state of affairs and crawled into one of the mines with my Uncle's miners to confirm the conditions that Arthur had described to us.

We asked my Uncle to have his accountant bring out all his ledgers so that H.H. could check the account books, calculations, and estimates. With the help of an abacus, H.H. went through the books while I took detailed notes and then wrote lengthy reports in long-hand to send home to Father. We reasoned that the mines had to be kept in working order, but obviously the coal could not be sold. They needed funds but owed legitimate debts, so there was no alternative but to honour them and see that the claims were paid. To be certain we were doing the correct thing, H.H. managed to find an eminent legal expert of international repute, Dr T.S. Cheng, to advise us. Instead of paying him a fee, he accepted a good Chinese dinner with some of his favourite well-matured wine that even I learned to like. Dr Cheng confirmed our conviction that the debts would have to be paid. After several months of correspondence with my Father, I reported our recommendations and asked him to pay the debts and let Uncle have a little more money to maintain the mine. He eventually did so and afterwards the mine continued to be worked, albeit on a smaller scale.

During this time I also wrote to Eva, sometimes in code because we used to have our womanly secrets to share. After I had completed a good deal of the necessary work for the coal business, I received a letter from Eva in which she asked me if I was really going to England. She

emphasised: "If you don't come now, I'll go alone." Actually, she had already booked passage for both of us and for Mamma, who had long ago promised that she would accompany us if we ever went to London to further our studies. Since I had finished my mining investigation, I wrote up the final reports, persuaded H.H. to take over my responsibilities, and then sent a telegram home saying that I would soon be returning.

When I arrived back in Hong Kong, I explained to Father that because there was little else for me to do concerning Uncle's coal project, I had asked H.H. Cheng to look after the coal mine for me. Soon after, H.H. visited Hong Kong to ask Father for specific instructions about the mining operation and to see us off on our travels. As it turned out, Father asked H.H. to hand the matter over to another friend of his, Mr Hsieh En-lung, an older man with whom he already had several business dealings. As mentioned, Father eventually realised that there was no alternative but to "pay up" for the ill-fated mining venture into which he had been coerced.

The friendship between H.H. and myself continued to strengthen. One evening while he was still in Hong Kong, we were all crossing the tennis court from No 49 to No 50 to have dinner. H.H., who was exceedingly shy, passed me a little box with a tiny hexagonally-shaped watch in it. The watch had several blue-coloured stones set in silver-coloured metal around the dial. He told me that he had noticed, when I had returned to Beijing after my Third Uncle's funeral, that I had been wearing a silver-coloured watch I had borrowed from Mamma. I was then in mourning and by custom could not wear my own gold watch. Consequently, H.H.'s father had bought him a silver-coloured watch to give to me for the trip. At first I tried to decline the gift, but H.H. was so hurt by my refusal that he was almost in tears, so I accepted it. The watch had a peculiar habit of stopping if I laid it down for any length of time, say for a night. However, if I wore it continuously on my wrist it kept perfect time. I did not find out why until some years later when I visited the famous watchmaker, Benson's, on behalf of Mamma. While there I asked them to have a look at my watch, first to tell me, out of curiosity, whether the stones were genuine or artificial and second to explain about its stopping when set down. Benson's told me that the blue stones were real sapphires and that the metal was platinum; however, the solution to the mechanical problem eluded them. It was only when I asked a Chinese watchmaker many years later that I learned the problem was due to the oil becoming less viscous when the watch was

set down; it needed the warmth of the human body to run smoothly. It was stupid of me to have been so ignorant, and I felt all the more guilty for causing H.H. and his father such expense as the watch must have cost a lot of money. For that and other reasons, I thereafter wore that watch constantly.

H.H. and I were parted by circumstances for about ten years until we met again, almost by accident. At first I had written him a couple of guarded letters, but he was a bad correspondent and replied only occasionally. Later I realised almost by instinct that because H.H. lived so far away in Beijing, Mamma would not approve of him. So I discontinued writing. However, I continued to wear his watch. As fate would have it, H.H. and I met again at the end of 1936 and eventually married in 1940, some 14 years after we had first met and fallen in love in 1926. I have often reflected that the little watch was the real matchmaker between us. At any rate, when my daughter asked me if she could have it, I gave her the timepiece, not just as a souvenir, but as a cherished family heirloom.

## EIGHT

# Postgraduate Travels

**I**n December 1926, Mamma, her amah-companion Second Auntie Leung, Eva, and I all sailed from Hong Kong on one of the Maru boats for Europe via Suez. The vessel called at the ports of Singapore, Penang, Colombo, and Aden. At Singapore and Penang we were well looked after by our contemporaries from The University of Hong Kong days, who showed us around their cities. In Penang we were given a special dinner party by the family of Dr K.C. Yeo, who had graduated with me a year earlier and then undergone a year's internship in the Hong Kong teaching hospital. It was he who had looked after Mamma during her long illness with skin trouble earlier that year. Dr Yeo was to join our ship for the rest of the journey. During our brief stay, I especially remember Penang's funicular railway, so similar to the Peak tram in Hong Kong, and the antics of a troupe of monkeys that lived in one of the parks. It was also an occasion to get together with some of my old Chinese and Malay classmates from Malaya who by then had all completed a year's work, mostly in the educational field. We were glad to see each other.

All too soon it was time to set sail on the next leg of the journey across the Indian Ocean, into the Arabian Sea to the port of Aden, and then through the Red Sea to Suez. Here we disembarked and travelled by land to see the Pyramids of Giza and the Sphinx. It is a trip that I shall never forget. Part of the way we went by car, but near the pyramids we rode camels, with Eva and I sharing one, while Mamma and K.C. had one large animal each. The photographer there offered to take our picture. The resulting print captured the essence of this memorable trip and showed us astride the animals with the architectural wonder of

ancient Egypt in the background and our stalwart Arab camel driver squatting in front of our three haughty mounts. We then continued north and stayed in a Port Said hotel for the night, which in contrast to the searing daytime heat was extremely cold. The following day we did some sightseeing before rejoining our boat, which had sailed slowly along the Suez Canal while we were gadding about on our side-trip. After we rejoined it, the vessel then sailed across the intensely blue Mediterranean Sea, not stopping until we reached Marseilles. We had arranged to disembark there and go overland to spend a week in Paris before reaching London in time to meet the boat. Second Auntie Leung stayed aboard the vessel, as did most of our baggage.

In Paris Eva and the famous travel agents, Thomas Cook and Sons, had arranged an interesting week for us. We visited museums and palaces, climbed the Eiffel Tower, watched people drinking coffee around little tables outside small cafes, and generally enjoyed the many activities in which tourists usually indulge. After a few exciting days in Paris, we still had enough time to go to Flanders to see the War Cemetery, a memorial for the military personnel who had lost their lives in World War I. The hostilities had ended less than ten years previously, of course, and the losses had been horrendous. In tribute to those who had given their lives in the so-called "War to End all Wars," the cemetery was immaculately kept with row upon row of tiny white crosses marking the graves on acres of trimmed green grass. At the time of our visit the poppies were in season, with blood-red blooms that bobbed freely in the gentle breeze. We could not help feeling saddened at the loss of human life that this simple and peaceful monument represented, and reflect on the atrocities of war. I was not alone in my vow to become more of a pacifist at heart.

We crossed the notoriously rough English Channel from Calais to Dover. Although it was a short journey, I did not feel well at all. Normally Mamma was an excellent traveller, but the weather was so bad that even she was quite unwell. Only Eva was able to withstand the rough seas. I have always remembered the last hour or so on the train from Dover to London. It was late afternoon, at the beginning of March, 1927, and the weather was grey and windy. To the clickety-clack of the train's wheels as we entered the outskirts of greater London's suburbia, we passed row upon row of tenement houses. Somehow, they gave me a miserable impression, redolent of the dreary conditions that must exist within slums.



Mamma had written to Lady Margaret's former companion, Miss Hartshorn, who had come all the way from Liverpool to meet the train, of course at our expense. There was also an efficient Thomas Cook man to greet us, and they escorted us to a hotel in the Oxford Street-Trafalgar Square area of Central London. During the next few days we looked around for more permanent accommodation and arranged to meet Second Auntie Leung with our baggage, which arrived soon after we did. One day when we were out of the hotel, a newspaper reporter, hearing that Lady Ho Tung was in London and thinking that she was Lady Margaret (who had been in London for the Wembley Exhibition the previous year), managed to find our room. He was obviously after a story but was met by Auntie Leung. The next day there was a small news item in the daily paper he worked for. This described Auntie Leung, proudly wearing her specially-made skirt, gesticulating and remonstrating with the reporter as only a Cantonese amah can that we had "all gone out!"

Fortunately, we soon found suitable accommodation in a good boarding house at No 2 Lancaster Gate. The newspapers made a further blunder, stating that "Lady Ho Tung has taken No 2 Lancaster Gate." This alarmed our landlady, for she feared she would lose many tenants. The newspaper printed a correction, and after that we successfully avoided any further encounter with the press. The boarding house had three storeys with many rooms, and a kitchen in the basement. On the ground floor, the landlady had her little office near the staircase; in front was the dining room with individual tables for guests who wished to dine alone. We, of course, were used to dining *en famille* and so had a large table. On the first floor there was a big sitting room that any guest could use and on the floor above was a large bedroom, which Mamma took for herself and Auntie Leung. There were many small rooms on each floor at the back of the house, so Eva, K.C., and I had one each to ourselves. When Robbie came from Woolwich from time to time to spend a weekend with us, he also had one of these rooms.

Soon after our arrival we got in touch with Miss Skipton, the retired headmistress of Diocesan Girls' School. I remember she advised us to get a good pocket atlas, with which I soon learned to get around London, particularly when I used it in conjunction with the bus and underground railway maps of the city. Some of the time Miss Skipton took us sightseeing herself, and she told us that one of the best ways to see London on our own was from the top of a bus. We did just that and

found it fascinating. Although so many things interested me, one thing that I could not even visualise until I arrived in London was its underground transport system. The size and extent of the service was overwhelming. However, after a few hesitant journeys, I came to know the various lines fairly well. As we lived quite near Lancaster Gate Station, I often travelled on the Central London and other main lines.

Eva and K.C. had already registered for the diploma course in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, which started soon after our arrival. Unfortunately for me, most of the colleges were closed for the Easter vacation and, worse still, I was not sure which course I should take. Father had said he would like me to take up law or business, neither of which I particularly cared for. In the case of law, I felt that if your client was in the right it was not much credit to win the case. Whereas, if the client was wrong and you got him acquitted, then you were manipulating and twisting justice. As for business, I felt one had to be somewhat dishonest to make a fortune. Of course I was probably wrong in my thinking, but that is what I felt at the time.

Although I lacked direction, I was not inactive. In the *Times*, a newspaper we took every day, the announcements often mentioned interesting happenings such as lectures at the British Museum or some other reputable institution. I would often attend these if the titles interested me. I also learned to make good use of the huge library at the British Museum, which is an education in itself. I signed up for a course in dressmaking. I had been interested in this subject at Diocesan Girls' School, where we had been taught the fundamentals of needlework. Now I went a stage further and learned how to use a sewing machine. I made a blouse and skirt for myself. Mamma needed a raincoat to wear over her fur coat. So I took the fur coat along to class, put it on the mannequin as a guide, and eventually succeeded in making an overgarment of weatherproof material. Mamma used that raincoat for many years, first in London and later in Hong Kong.

If I were free, each morning after breakfast I would escort Mamma for a short walk, sometimes to the crossing to Hyde Park that was always patrolled by a Metropolitan London policeman. In those days, London Bobbies had to be a minimum of six feet tall in order to qualify for the job. Our local Bobby would wait for an appropriate moment, stop the traffic, and then personally escort us across the street. It was then a short distance to Peter Pan's statue near the Serpentine. Mamma loved to sit on one of the benches by the side of the lake and feed the

ducks and ducklings from a bag of breadcrumbs she had brought with her. Sometimes she would just meditate or say her prayers on the rosary that she always carried with her, or simply bask in the warm sunshine. One day she was lucky enough to see some sheep being shorn. I would have liked to witness such a scene in the middle of London, but never had the good fortune to do so. After I escorted her out for some days, I could simply take her to the park entrance and let her go on by herself.

Mamma was then just over 51 years of age and knew enough English to get around and be understood. However, she was not used to going around on her own because her feet had been bound when she was a child, which slightly affected the way she walked. I assumed the responsibility of escorting her when necessary. Later she learned to go by herself to the branch post office, the local grocery, and other little shops in a street nearby. Every Friday morning she would buy a piece of lean pork from the grocery, then Auntie Leung would cut it up into small segments and have them well salted and left in the boarding house refrigerator for two nights. On Sunday morning the two women would use the little gas burner in their room to boil up a pot of salted lean pork broth, which had always been a favourite breakfast meal for us at weekends. If Robbie came home for the weekend, he too would enjoy it with us.

When the term reopened, I registered for a few courses at the London School of Economics (LSE), including one on economics and another on industrial psychology. My former history lecturer at The University of Hong Kong, the Rev Romanis Lee, who was then a reader at one of the Cambridge colleges, thought I might become interested in industrial psychology and welfare work. Consequently, he arranged with a number of his friends in the Midlands to act as hostesses for me to see some of the larger factories and the welfare services provided for their workers. In this way I toured such famous manufacturing concerns as Player's, Cadbury's, and Rowntree's. I also met Dr Eileen Power, a brilliant LSE lecturer whom I came to know and admire a great deal. She allowed me to visit her at home many times. At the school I saw some advertisements posted on the notice board and decided to sign up with the National Institute of Industrial Psychology for a vocational guidance test. They presented me with a searching questionnaire to fill out and, afterwards, decided that the various practical tests were not really appropriate in my case. On another day they had me come in for a lengthy interview. Finally, they sent me a two-page report that I felt

was appropriate enough. The report stated that my personality did not indicate that I should take up business or law and that teaching or social work might be suitable for me. However, as psychology was an important aspect for both careers, they suggested that I should begin taking courses in that subject.

I always believed it advisable, especially for Mamma, to get away from London for some time each year and take advantage of a warmer climate. With this partly in mind, and conscious of the fact that many organisations often hold international conferences for students, teachers, or people with similar interests to enable them to meet their peers from other countries, I became interested in two overseas conferences. The first was organised by the International Student Service (ISS) and was to be held in Schiers, near Chur, Switzerland. Mamma and K.C. decided to come along too.

During our train journey to Chur one of my most thrilling memories was waking up to the sight of snow-capped mountains in the middle of summer and breathing in air that was altogether fresh and invigorating. What a glorious vista it was. In Hong Kong, of course, there was never any snow, but I do remember seeing a light dusting in the courtyard of the Liang mansion during part of a winter I spent in Beijing. I shall never forget the majestic spectacle of Switzerland and the Alps. During the ISS conference we were taken by bus to see various famous resorts in the region. When I attended the lectures and discussions, Mamma would often come along with me, as she understood a good deal of English and the atmosphere was very friendly.

One day Mamma had considerable pain in one of her fingers and was running a fever, so I took her to see a local doctor. However, since this happened near the end of the conference, as soon as it was over I took Mamma to a famous sanatorium in the Black Forest where we had stayed for two weeks the previous Christmas. There she could have a good rest and get medical attention when necessary. K.C. returned to England at the end of the Swiss conference, while after Mamma's rest at the sanatorium we went on to Italy. The second of the conferences I had chosen to attend was to be held in Rome, which gave me a chance to see the Holy City. Needless to say, I became enraptured by the sheer magnificence of Rome. The conference took second place to my sightseeing activities, but I made sure we did not miss anything important.

The highlight in Rome, for me, was a visit to the Vatican to see the

Pope. We did not know then that in order to enter a Roman Catholic church, women's heads had to be covered and no short-sleeved dresses were allowed. We used handkerchiefs to cover our heads, and some of the men in our group lent us their jackets to wear over our short sleeves. We had to line up and as we passed the Pope, each of us had to bend down and kiss his big ruby ring as he held out his hand for us. The paintings and architecture, both within the Vatican and in the museums we visited, were stunningly beautiful. There, as in the museums of England, we saw many marble statues; it took me a long time, I must admit, to get used to seeing statues of men and women in the nude.

When the time finally came to leave Rome, I went to a branch of Thomas Cook's to finalise our travel arrangements for the return journey. When we made the preliminary bookings in London, the agent told us that it was a very roundabout journey to go by train from Vienna to Prague, but that there was a good flight that would serve us for that part of the journey. We hesitated to book the air trip and left it open, because Mamma was reluctant to travel by air as she had heard that it was quite dangerous for a person with a weak heart. However, I later consulted Mamma's doctor in London and he explained that it was only dangerous for people with valvular heart trouble, whereas Mamma had only a nervous condition, so it would not affect her. We booked that flight.

First we travelled from Rome to Venice, where we had an enjoyable ride in a gondola. The city itself reminded me of Suzhou in China, and I was most interested in the Venetian glass-making process, which I later also saw in China. Then we went to Vienna and were met by an Austrian friend, Oscar Bock, who also knew people at Schiers as he was an important person in the International Student Service. Mamma and I met an interesting old lady friend of Oscar's, one of those kind, lovable types, and together we all went to the opera. I could not understand a single word. However, Oscar knew the story well and whispered the salient details to us as the scenes progressed. Oscar later came to London to work in the Fellowship of Reconciliation, which meant trying to get the British and the Austrians, who were enemies during World War I, to become friends again. Oscar kindly taught me a little German and drilled me carefully in the correct pronunciation of the alphabet. I also learned a couple of simple poems and songs in that language. Mamma liked Oscar's gentle manner and always invited him to stay for lunch with us after our lessons on Saturday mornings.

We were due to fly from the Vienna airport, and the weather that morning was quite bad. While waiting to take off, Mamma became nervous again and tried to persuade me to write a simple postcard home to Father to be left at the airport for posting, in case anything should go wrong. She wanted me to state that she herself had decided to take the flight and that I was not to be blamed if anything untoward happened. I appreciated her thoughtfulness but refused to write the card, assuring her that nothing would happen and thus trying to calm her fears.

The trip actually proved much worse than I had anticipated, as there was a strong wind and our plane was only a small "Baby Moth." Besides Mamma and me, there was only one other passenger. The plane was about the same size as a sports car, and there were only two seats inside the cabin. The other passenger had to ride in the open cockpit, sitting next to the pilot. The wind was so fierce that the passenger who was exposed to the elements lost his cap and goggles. Even Mamma, who had never been seasick, felt extremely uncomfortable.

The plane landed after an hour's flight. We assumed that we had finally reached Prague, but had no such luck. We were told the weather had been so foggy that the pilot had been unable to find the Czechoslovak capital. We were right back where we started, in Vienna. We had to wait at the airport another hour before we could take off again, but fortunately this time the sky was clear and we reached Prague without mishap or further delay. However, instead of sightseeing as we had planned, we took a well-needed rest for the remainder of the day. As a matter of consolation, we had had two flights for the price of one, and Mamma was absolutely thrilled that she had finally flown in an aeroplane. She wrote to Father about her experience, and I believe he was quite envious. When I went with him five years later on his golden honeymoon with Lady Margaret, he begged me to take him up for a flight, so I arranged for us to be passengers on the Graf Zeppelin. It was the first time he had flown, and he was delighted. In later years, if ever I wanted to cheer him up, I just had to mention that flight and he would beam.

There was another aspect of our summer trip to Europe in 1927 that greatly pleased me. Mamma had a long memory and every year, whenever it was the anniversary of the birth or death of her parents or her son Henry, she would be in a sad mood all day. It happened that four out of six of these anniversary dates fell during the summer months, but in 1927 Mamma was so busy and interested in our other activities that

she had no time to dwell too much on our departed relatives. It was a happy, busy time.

We travelled around Germany and visited many cities, including Dresden, Reinhold, Berlin, Hamburg, and Harburg. In Dresden we met a particularly interesting couple, Dr and Mrs Reinhold Schairer, who later came to London and stayed many years there. He was Director of the Work Students Organisation, a project begun after World War I to send high-achieving students, selected for personality and potential, to the United States for a few years of study in their particular field of interest. There was no obligation tied to this absolutely free opportunity, except that the students had to return to Germany and do something for the people there. Dr Schairer was an inspiring person, broad of stature with a strong personality and exceedingly sympathetic nature. Eventually, while I was working for my Ph.D thesis in the 1930s, he was also in London and became my mentor. Every week I visited their home, bringing whatever I had been able to write in the interim to Dr Schairer, who would discuss and critique my work. I feel certain that without his urging I might never have completed my thesis, or at least would have added a couple of years to the time I had to spend.

Dresden is of course famous for its well-known and admired Meissen China, and I saw much of it in one of the museums there. I could not know at the time that Dresden would later be badly bombed during World War II. The thought of that beautiful old city being destroyed by war is saddening—I will always be a pacifist at heart, despite everything. In Berlin and Hamburg, we stopped only for general sightseeing. However, at Harburg we visited Mamma's old friend, Mrs Weischer of Tsingtao. I believe at the time her husband, the doctor, was still working in China. Their only son Johann, an airline pilot, was staying with her in Germany. Later the son died in an air crash, and after the doctor passed away, Mrs Weischer was left all alone in the world. However, she was close to my sister Grace, who invited her to visit England on many occasions. I, too, liked Mrs Weischer very much.

All too soon our travels around Europe came to an end, and indeed I was then ready to settle down and resume my life as a student in London. Acting on the advice of the National Institute for Industrial Psychology, I went to King's College, Strand, a coeducational institution. At that time there was another King's College for Women, so most people added the name of the street, Strand, to avoid confusion. Meanwhile, I had written

to London University authorities, asking them if I might be allowed to work towards their Ph.D degree. I hoped that I would receive credit for the year I had worked on the diploma course towards the higher degree.

During the 1927-28 academic year at London University, there were many colleges and training establishments for secondary school teachers. All of them sent their students to the auditorium of the London Day Training College for the three main lecture series, held on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Dr (later Sir) Percy Nunn, director of London Day Training College, gave the series on "Principles of Education," which in America would probably be called the "Philosophy of Education." Dr (later Sir) Cyril Burt, of University College, delivered a series on educational psychology. Both were year-long offerings. Meanwhile, Dr Dover Wilson of King's College lectured on the history of education in the United Kingdom during the autumn term and gave another group of lectures on the English educational system during the spring term. I enjoyed the first two series, especially as I had read Dr Burt's thick volume on *The Young Delinquent*. This work was available in The University of Hong Kong library and our lecturer there, Prof Nind Smith, had recommended it to me. When I returned to London in 1932, I hoped to work under Sir Cyril Burt on the prevention of juvenile delinquency, but I later had to abandon the idea due to my poor health and eventually changed to another topic.

Dr Nunn also presided over an interesting course on the teaching of mathematics, which I found stimulating. Further, each college offered some minor programmes for its own students, and King's College provided tuition on Methods, Health Education, and Elocution. They also had a supervisor who arranged practice teaching sessions for each student and, from time to time, would come to watch us teaching. My establishment, the Lady Eleanor Hollis Cripplegate Foundation School for Girls, was situated in northeast London. I taught mathematics two or three days a week to teenagers, an experience that I believe they enjoyed as much as I did.

I noticed that my fellow college students from England were extremely reserved and that those of the opposite sex hardly had anything to do with each other. A few of the girls were quite friendly towards me, so one day I asked one about her apparent reserve. She explained that, as a rule, the men and women came from different social levels, and their families preferred them not to become too



involved with one another. One of the girls, Miss Mallet, got on so well with me that she invited me to spend a weekend with her family at Reading. I often feel sorry that I lost touch with her, which happened chiefly because I suddenly had to return home in late spring.

My departure occurred during the Whitsun holidays, roughly seven weeks after Easter. One day before leaving, I was asked in my practice school to tell the children about China and Hong Kong. I chose to tell them as much as I could about rural conditions in the New Territories, which of course were almost identical to those in China itself. I remember the children asking me many questions, one of which was: "Does it snow in China?" I replied: "Yes, it snows in north China, but there the snow is pure white, not grey as it is here in London." In those days, fireplaces in London homes used bituminous coal. That practice is now forbidden, and people must burn the much cleaner anthracite. A few of the newer and more luxurious buildings in London at that time had central heating and air conditioning, but most of the homes were still dependent upon open fireplaces. These may have given a cheerful warmth to a room in winter, but resulted in tons of sooty deposits that regularly had to be cleaned from the chimneys. In addition, the smoke given off, combined with the damp mist surrounding the River Thames, gave rise to the notorious London "pea souper" fogs that later came to be known as smog.

Before Whitsun, Mamma felt that with my final examinations approaching I should concentrate on revising what I had already learned. Her idea was for me to go somewhere quiet and conducive to self-study, accompanied by another Chinese girl, Miss Djang Siao-mei, who was studying for her Ph.D in economics. I had met Siao-mei in the British Museum library, which we both frequented, and we had become friends. Eventually I had taken her home to meet Mamma, who liked her so much that she called her goddaughter. Mamma asked me to write to Lady Margaret's former companion, Miss Hartshorn in Liverpool, asking that she and her sister come south. Miss Hartshorn was to stay with Mamma while the sister would stay with us girls in a little cottage we had rented in the village of Littlehampton, near Worthing, on the Dorsetshire coast. The plan was for Miss Hartshorn's sister to become our housekeeper so that we could concentrate on our studies.

Siao-mei was a brilliant student from a prominent Shanghai family. I did not know at the time that she once had a grandfather in England who had been in the Chinese diplomatic service. He had sent

for her when she was quite young so that she could obtain much of her education in England, including the study of classical Chinese taught by a Chinese tutor. I only became aware of this in 1991, after having known Siao-mei since 1928. Siao-mei was several years younger than I, so she always treated me like an elder sister. When we were tired of studying, we would go for short walks by the seaside, which was an ideal environment for both of us.

One day while I was studying, I received an urgent letter from Mamma asking me to telephone her. She told me she had received a letter from Father saying that Robbie was getting married and asking her to return home for the happy event. I was not the least surprised by the news. A couple of months before, Robbie had had an operation on his leg for sciatic pain, and I had gone with Mamma to visit him in the hospital at Bristol. On the mantelpiece I noticed a large cupid, which I knew had been decorated by Jean's classmate, Hesta. I figured there was some romance in Robbie's life. I also knew that he had been planning to return to Hong Kong for a short visit, after his training at Woolwich Military Academy but before another officer's course at Fontainebleau, near Paris. I mentioned his return visit and said to him: "I am sure this time when you get home, they will put you in formalin." This was our private joke, meaning that the family would have him married off. He replied: "Not a chance, because I have two older sisters not yet married." I told him vehemently that I was sure that Eva, as well as I, would not mind in the least if he got married before we did.

According to old-fashioned Chinese ideas, it simply was not proper to have a younger sibling marry before an older one. Sometimes in order to make it easier for the younger brother or sister to get married, the family just married the older sister(s) off or made them "put their hair up." This referred to a ceremony during which they declared they would never marry. I took the trouble to write a letter to Father, re-emphasising what I had told Robbie. I added that this applied not only to Robbie, as Eva and I would have no objection if all the younger sisters married before we did.

Mamma insisted that she would not go home without me, although she knew I would not be able to take my exams and still be home in time for the wedding. I even suggested that Mamma invite Miss Hartshorn to accompany her home, leaving me in London. But she would have none of it. Although I was desperate, I had no choice but to give in. I wept bitterly that night. But the next day I resolved to visit Prof Nunn

and seek his advice. He carefully considered my problem and then asked me if I wanted to work in China or Hong Kong. I told him that if I could find a suitable job, I would much prefer to work in China, because the community's need there was greater. He advised: "If you want to teach in Hong Kong, our course here would be best for you, but if you want to work in China, you should go to Teachers' College in New York." I asked him: "Is it better there?" He replied: "They know the China situation better, and they also have more courses to offer." Consequently, I decided to try for the September term at Teachers' College—provided, of course, I could obtain Father's permission to do so.

I must mention here a little about our relationship with Father. Whenever we had anything important to discuss with him, he would always ask us to give him a memo about it. I, at least, got into the habit of doing that. I knew that if I gave him a memo, he would have to read it at some time or another. Then he would have time to think it over and reply to me either in writing or verbally. Or he might tell his secretary or one of his servants to relay a message. Thus before I left London in 1928 to escort Mamma home for Robbie's wedding, I wrote Father a long letter, sending it via Siberia as there was then no airmail service. I told him that I had to leave England this time for family reasons, but I looked to him to try to get me out of Hong Kong again. I emphasised that I had not yet taken any exams, had insufficient postgraduate studies, and wanted to do more. I explained that before I left London I had contacted Prof Nunn, who strongly advised me to attend Columbia University Teachers' College, and that I would really like to go there after my Hong Kong visit.

We left England in a rush and had to pack our things in considerable haste because we managed to obtain berths on a Blue Funnel vessel, the SS Hector, which was due to leave London in about a week's time. We put our baggage and Second Auntie Leung aboard ship at once. About a week later, after it had delivered some cargo around the coast, Mamma and I boarded the vessel at Liverpool. During the previous week, Mamma, Eva, and I passed the time by spending a few days in the exquisitely beautiful Lake District before we finally began the return voyage to Hong Kong. We again went via Suez, but instead of getting off we stayed aboard all the way through the narrow canal. It was an interesting experience.

To relieve the monotony of spending weeks at sea, in those days large ocean-going liners regularly organised an assortment of deck

games and social events. I remember that on the way home I won a prize during a fancy dress evening. For my portrayal of a nurse, I borrowed a long white gown from one of the stewardesses on board and carried a little tray complete with stopwatch, thermometer, water, and a small bottle filled with cotton wool. It took little effort to prepare, but I was awarded the second prize: a silver powder-box emblazoned with the Blue Funnel Line crest on top. This dainty trinket has managed to survive all my travels and the travails of World War II. I still have it to this day.

When we reached Singapore, I was pleasantly surprised and grateful to receive a letter from Father that he had simply addressed to Miss Irene Ho Tung, First-class Passenger, SS Hector, c/o of the Blue Funnel office, Singapore. It was considerate of him to acknowledge my letter and to offer his sympathy at my being dragged away from my studies, although he pointed out that it would not be easy to allow me to go away again. Within a few days of our arrival in Hong Kong, Mamma was busy with all the arrangements for Robbie's wedding to Hesta Hung, whose family were good friends of our parents. I had often visited her mother and sister after attending my Chinese lectures in 1926, because their home was on the same terrace as the Chinese Library. As fate would have it, I ultimately missed the wedding celebrations in their entirety. At the time I was laid up with a bad backache and fever. In a way, it may have been just as well, because Chinese superstition—of which I was then not aware—advised that unmarried elder sisters or brothers should not be present when a younger sibling is being married. I still do not know whether it was supposed to be unlucky for the bride and bridegroom or for me.

I was still anxious to have an interview with Father in order to press my case for Teachers' College. Unfortunately, I soon found out that it would be exceedingly difficult to get an appointment, as father was doubly hindered, dogged by both ill health and the need to attend his many business meetings. At that time he was a director of more than a dozen different companies and had an exceedingly tight schedule. I later discovered that there was also another reason why it was difficult to see him. Father actually did not want to give me an appointment for fear of seeming to encourage me. His staff told me they could not fit me into his schedule. Finally, he went over to Macau where he would sometimes stay for several weeks. Not to be outdone, I felt that the only sure way of reaching him was to write him a longer memo in which I

would state my case even more clearly and strongly than previously. I knew that sooner or later he would find time to read it and perhaps give me an answer.

Meanwhile, even before Father went to Macau, an incident occurred that made me feel all the more uncertain that I would ever get the chance to leave home again. It will be remembered that in 1926 I had the good fortune of taking a holiday trip in China for several months with a young lady from Macau and another from Shanghai. The one from the Portuguese enclave was Miss Siu Wai-sheung, whom Mamma usually called her goddaughter. When Mamma and I were in London from 1927 to 1928, Wai-sheung was in New York City. Her father had died some years previously and had made her his executrix, partly because she and an elder married sister were the only two children of his wife, although there were a large number of younger sisters and brothers by the father's concubines. She was a college graduate and a good business woman. Her father had left many possessions, furs, and other articles of a personal or household nature. Wai-sheung divided them equally according to value and let the sisters and brothers draw lots to decide on their distribution. She also set up a curio shop in Hong Kong called Pandora, where she tried to sell some of the more expensive items with some other merchandise that she had bought on the open market to add to the store's inventory. When this did not prove successful, Wei-sheung finally decided to take most of the curios and valuables to New York, where she also registered for several courses at Columbia University. While there, she tried to dispose of the treasures in her spare time.

At first Wai-sheung stayed at International House, a privilege for many international students at Columbia. On October 10, 1927, which was then Chinese National Day, Chinese students celebrated with a party at which Wai-sheung met a young Chinese law student from Shanghai, the self-styled "Dr" Miao. He took a special interest in Wai-sheung and cultivated her friendship assiduously from that day on. He even persuaded her to move from International House to Whittier Hall, where there were only women students, with no men to compete for her attention. Dr Miao had taken some law courses in Chicago but later transferred to New York, where he picked up a few credits from several universities and managed to earn a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree. He had little money, but it seems he switched this around in

several bank accounts so that it would appear to Wai-sheung that he was a man of fairly considerable means. Whenever she questioned him about his home and family, he always managed to put her off. Wai-sheung, as mentioned, was not a pretty girl and was well past the normal marriageable age. "Dr" Miao, on the other hand, was tall, handsome, and seemed to be what one would consider extremely eligible. He told her that he was madly in love with her.

When Mamma and I were still in England, Siu Wai-sheung had written to us from New York saying that she was coming to visit us in London. I felt later that she had wanted to tell Mamma about her romance, or perhaps to get Mamma's blessing and my good wishes. When we suddenly changed our plans and had to return to Hong Kong, I immediately wrote to tell Wai-sheung that we were moving back home. She then told her friends in New York that she was planning to return to Hong Kong via London and that Dr Miao intended to escort her. Some of her friends strongly advised her to get married in New York instead of travelling as an engaged couple. So that is what she decided to do. Wai-sheung had influential friends in New York, and even the Chinese Consul-General took part by 'officiating' at the wedding ceremony. An elderly American lady with a lovely flat on Fifth Avenue arranged to have the wedding reception there. The wedding photographs were duly taken and sent to our home in Hong Kong, reaching us before the end of summer.

Then tragedy struck. One day, when I happened to be at Idlewild, we received a telegram from England. It was addressed to Father from Dr Miao and read: "Wai-sheung been murdered (sic) and I am in big trouble here. Beg you to come (sic) this important matter. I pay you (sic) expenses." His English grammar was far from perfect, and I have simply recorded it verbatim from the wire. He had signed his full name—I think it was Miao Chung-Yi—but with the passing of the years I am not sure about his given names. I was naturally astounded and saddened at the news. I could not figure out what had happened, except that I had lost a dear friend. I cannot remember exactly what Father or Mamma said, but when I took the telegram upstairs to Lady Margaret's room, read it, and carefully explained it to her, to my great surprise and disbelief, she exclaimed: "I am sure he must be the culprit." No matter how much I protested, believing that such a thing could not be possible, Lady Margaret stuck to her theory that Dr Miao, Wai-sheung's husband, must have been the murderer. She did not explain why she thought so.

Because of his poor health and heavy business commitments at that time, it was out of the question for Father to even think about going to England. However, we consulted M.K. and got in touch with Wai-sheung's family in Hong Kong. There was a case against Miao being prosecuted by the Crown, as he had been charged with murdering his wife. Although the Siu family had asked M.K.'s firm, Messrs Lo and Lo of Hong Kong, to act for them, all the firm could do was have their associates in London watch over the case on behalf of the deceased's family. Messrs. Lo and Lo asked me to obtain as much information as possible from the family, so that they could pass it on to their associates in England. Hence it was my lot to interview various members of the Siu family and write out my findings. The whole summary came to only a couple of dozen pages, but the task kept me busy for some time, and I gradually had the sinking feeling that the chances of my family willingly letting me go abroad again were becoming exceedingly small.

The murder case was terrible and for a while it gave all Chinese students abroad a bad reputation. The story unfolded with a happy Wai-sheung marrying Miao in New York and then travelling by passenger liner to Liverpool. From there they set forth to explore the Lake District. While staying at a little hotel in this idyllic spot, one afternoon they went out for a walk. Later Miao returned to the hotel alone and subsequently appeared for dinner without his wife. The staff enquired after her, and Miao told them that Wai-sheung had gone into town to buy some warm underclothing and might have been delayed. Meanwhile, a retired detective who lived in a neighbouring village had been out for a walk in the country during late afternoon that same day. Catching sight of an open umbrella lying in the distance, he walked over to have a closer look and was horrified to find the body of a dead woman. It was, in fact, Wai-sheung, and she had been strangled by a window cord. The detective immediately reported the grisly find to the local police. As there were no other Chinese people living in that neighbourhood, the local constabulary easily traced Miao and immediately went to the hotel and spoke with him. They told him that his wife had been murdered and that he would have to go with them for questioning. Apparently his immediate, emotional response was: "What? My wife has been robbed, raped, and murdered?"

That outburst subsequently assumed great importance because nobody had previously said anything to Miao about rape, though Wai-sheung's clothes had been arranged to make it seem that this had

been the case. Miao told the police that his wife had with her certain articles of jewellery, including a string of pearls, and indeed the police later found a string of pearls in her jewellery box. However, on another occasion he claimed that she had two strings of pearls. There were other inconsistencies that peppered his testimony throughout. In a drawer in the couple's hotel room the police found some window cord just like the piece that had been tied round the poor woman's neck. They also found a roll of used film and took it, hoping that it might provide some clues when developed. When the photographer opened the packet, Wai-sheung's expensive engagement ring fell out. Confronted with this damning revelation, Miao's explanation sounded thoroughly unconvincing: "Wai-sheung often hides her jewellery here or there," he said. Later, the police told him that they wanted to take his coat to examine it for bloodstains. He was quick to explain that when in Chicago he had accidentally "got some blood" on the coat. However, when an examination of the garment was conducted, it did not reveal any stains whatsoever. The police by then were totally unconvinced of his innocence, so he was arrested and subsequently charged.

Eventually Miao was convicted of murdering his wife, but allowed the privilege of an appeal. This time he acted as his own advocate, but again the guilty verdict stuck. Consequently, he was sentenced to death and hanged. Wai-sheung's family were able to arrange for her remains to be taken back to Hong Kong, where she is buried in the Chinese Christian Cemetery. Miao's family also tried to get his remains back to be buried in Shanghai, but this was not allowed. He had to be buried in the prison cemetery where his trial had been conducted, in the Lake District of England.

While this sad drama was unfolding, I was still waiting for a word from Father. Eventually, I received a letter from him saying that he had carefully read my letter and suggested that I go over to Macau to see him. I felt that this was like throwing a lifeline to someone about to drown, so I grabbed at the opportunity. However, I did not dare admit to Mamma that I was going over to see Father about my own affairs. It was true that he had passed on to me a few brief drafts of his memoirs, so I told Mamma that perhaps he wanted me to discuss them and took the morning boat to Macau the following day. I was grateful that immediately after lunch he told me to bring my pencil and some paper, because he wanted to dictate a letter, the intended recipient of which was myself. He thought that this was better than asking his secretary to



to do it, although he would still want a copy and, of course, my written reply. I later copied both letters in longhand and made carbon copies for myself, giving him the originals for his records. At that time, I had not yet learnt how to use a typewriter.

I do not remember Father's exact words, but I can well recall the gist of the letter. Father said that he had carefully read what I had written and approved of my intentions as stated. But he wanted to ask me a few questions, one of which was that I should consider carefully the fact that I was then "of suitable marriageable age"—I was almost 24—and that if I went off for a few more years of study I might be "leaving it too late for marriage." He also wanted me to explain more clearly my "aims and ambitions." In my reply, I told him frankly and honestly that the subject of marriage did not bother me at all. As for my aims and ambitions, I set them out carefully, trying not to aim for something I could not really hope to achieve and yet aiming high enough to win his consent. He continued to ask me a few more minor questions, and I gave him my "considered opinion" regarding each of them. After this I presented him with my written reply, as we had agreed.

Father seemed satisfied and for the next few days made me feel really welcome. He would occasionally ask the cook-amah to buy some crabs or a pigeon for me as a special treat. Macau, of course, is famous for these two dishes. Frequently in the afternoon we would go down to the Praya Grande by rickshaw or by hired car and stroll along that well-known and historic walkway beside the muddy waters of the Pearl River estuary. There was always a cool breeze under the shady banyan trees. All in all, I spent a few happy and relaxing days with Father, and I could see he also enjoyed my company.

However, the summer was passing quickly and I wondered when there would be a boat sailing across the Pacific Ocean to the New World that would enable me to arrive at Teachers' College in time for the September term. In those days, with flying still in its infancy, transoceanic air travel was still the stuff of dreams. Father normally arranged for the leading English language daily newspaper in Hong Kong to be sent over to Macau whenever he was staying there. Therefore one afternoon I was able to pick up the paper while I was in his room and look for the sailings normally announced therein. He noticed my avid interest in the shipping movements and suddenly asked me when I would have to leave Hong Kong. I told him that according to the paper there would be one of the Empress boats sailing in about ten days, which could take me to the

west coast of Canada. From there I could take the Canadian Express right across the continent and arrive in New York just in time for the last day of registration before classes began.

Father came alive to the need for action. "In that case you must go back to Hong Kong immediately as there is much to be done," he exclaimed. But he made me promise that I would not say he had given his permission. I was to say that Father had referred the matter to my two mothers and that I would have to seek their permission to leave Hong Kong once more. I thought this was very diplomatic of him, but I also knew it would still not be an easy matter to convince them that I was making the right move. Father also reminded me that I would have to obtain a visa from the US Consulate, but advised me that instead of trying for a student's visa, I should aim for a visitor's visa. This would be valid for a year and would be quite sufficient for the purposes of taking the course, which in reality lasted for eight months. The following day I returned to Hong Kong after spending about ten of the happiest days of my life in Macau.

When I got back from the Portuguese enclave, at first I did not dare speak to Mamma about my hopes of going to Teachers' College, so I went down to Idlewild to discuss the matter with Lady Margaret. Her reaction was to remind me that both my parents were in poor health, and she quoted a well-known Chinese saying: "When your parents are alive you should not travel far." However, when she saw that I had made up my mind to press the point, she said: "Don't ask me, ask your own mother." Then she gave me some advice about life in general and the choices I would have to make if I really wanted to become a teacher.

Upon my return to the Peak house, I found that Father had written a letter in Chinese and in his own handwriting to my two mothers. In it he said: "Our fifth daughter has told me about her wish to go abroad again to America to study. I have cross-examined her rather carefully; I think her intentions are genuine and we, as parents, should encourage her. However, I do not want to make the decision and so leave it to you two." I appreciated Father's assistance, but I did not have the courage to show the letter to Mamma. So I left it on the table, in a place where I knew she would see it. When she saw it she asked when it had come and I told her it had arrived the same day. She opened it, read it, and immediately realised that it implied that Father had already given his consent. So Mamma, to some extent, proceeded to play on my emotions, saying: "My health is so bad, I won't be alive when you come

back. And what about your father; what will you do if he gets very sick?"

I answered her calmly, "By all means let me know if there is any trouble; if I can come back, I will. A couple of years ago when Third Uncle Ho Fook passed away, I knew you would be upset, so I didn't complete my holidays and came back immediately. Therefore I would certainly come back this time if necessary." Mamma could not argue the point any more, and from then on she did not put any difficulties in my way. In fact, she asked my brother-in-law, Horace (Grace's husband), to buy a camera for me. He bought me a pocket Kodak, which I later used frequently to keep Mamma photographically informed of my activities abroad. I quickly made reservations for the journey and obtained the appropriate visa for America.

Meanwhile, as Jean had just had an operation and both she and Grace were enjoying their summer holidays, Mamma thought it would be a good idea to let them go with me as far as Japan so they could have the benefit of the sea voyages and also see a bit of that country. We booked passage on one of the Canadian Pacific "Empress" liners. When our boat was about to sail, Andrew Tse, the eldest grandson of our fifth paternal uncle, Mr Ho Kam Tong, came on board to bid farewell to a Roman Catholic priest. He was actually a Maryknoll Father who was travelling on the same boat as far as Shanghai, so Andrew introduced us to each other. After the vessel had cast off, we chatted for a while. When the priest learned that I was going on to Canada alone, with no one to meet me on arrival, he voluntarily sent a wireless telegram to the Maryknoll Convent at Vancouver, British Columbia. He did not consult me first, although he later informed me of what he had done. I appreciated his kindness, but at the time I actually did not feel it necessary for him to put his colleagues to any trouble on my account.

Our parents, who had travelled frequently to Japan, advised us to get off the boat at Kobe and rejoin it later in Yokohama. The scenery was beautiful when we sailed through the picturesque Inland Sea. The three of us duly disembarked at Kobe and went sightseeing while the vessel refuelled and took aboard new cargo and passengers. The Empress then wound its way gradually round the peninsula to its next port of call, Yokohama, where it had to repeat the victualling process once again. Meanwhile Jean, Grace, and I spent the first night aboard the Tokyo-bound train. Early the next morning we had the special

pleasure of seeing Mount Fuji at dawn. Jean and Grace went straight on to Mianoshita, while I chose to catch a glimpse of Tokyo and Nikko, after which I rejoined them at Mianoshita. However, in a day or two it was time for me to leave and rejoin my boat. Jean and Grace stayed on a little longer, waiting for another Empress vessel going in the opposite direction to take them back to Hong Kong. We had enjoyed ourselves immensely, and I was exceedingly glad that my travels had given Jean and Grace the opportunity to come at least part of the way with me.

In order to reach Yokohama from Mianoshita, where I spent my last night in Japan with Jean and Grace, there was no convenient or inexpensive means of transport. So I ordered a taxi, which would take me there in a couple of hours. During the journey, I looked in a small travel bag containing my documents to make sure that everything was in order. To my horror, I could not find my passport. I was frantic, and on the verge of panic. Fortunately I still had plenty of time, so as soon as we got into the port city, I asked the taxi driver to take me to the Yokohama Specie Bank, where I knew the Chinese compradore, Mr Pao Ming-sheung, who was a good friend of my parents. Once there, I told Mr Pao the problem and he immediately took me to the British Consulate. Fortunately, I was able to give them complete details of my passport, including the number and date of issue. The embassy officials gave me a letter stating that I had mislaid my passport but that the details I had provided were correct. Mr Pao then took me to the American Consulate, where I was also given a covering letter. All I had to confirm my bona fides were my notes and these two letters, but there was no time to do anything else. I returned to the ship and we sailed forth.

When we docked in Vancouver, sure enough, the Maryknoll Sisters were waiting to greet me. To their utter shock and my mild bemusement, they were thoroughly taken aback because they thought I was arriving to become a nun. Otherwise, why would the good Maryknoll Father take the trouble to send a telegram about me, asking them to meet my ship? I felt somewhat embarrassed when I explained to them that I was merely on the way to study at Columbia University. As we had arrived on a Saturday, the kindly priest's telegram turned out to be a godsend. The Canadian Immigration officers soon came aboard the Empress to inspect our passports and, of course, I lacked the customary documentation. However, when they found that I did not possess a valid passport, the Maryknoll Sisters stepped in and told the officers that they would be taking charge of me. They assured the Immigration people

that they would keep an eye on me and that I would be under their safe care and custody. As I had to wait until Monday morning to be cross-examined by Immigration, I stayed the weekend in the nuns' hospice, and they even took me around for a little sightseeing.

Eventually I disentangled myself from the Canadian bureaucracy, which was a friendly one, and set out across the continent by rail. It was a comfortable ride aboard the Canadian Pacific Railways transcontinental express. The journey took several days to complete. I had a sleeping compartment in which each evening the seats would be converted into beds by a black attendant. I enjoyed the rugged scenery as we crossed the Rocky Mountains, perhaps the more so as I had been interested in the Great Divide ever since I studied geography at Diocesan Girls' School. Sometimes I went to the observation car at the front of the train to get an even better view of the Canadian wilderness, prairie, and lakes. After taking a connecting train from Toronto, I arrived in New York City on a Friday evening. There was another student, Eleanor Thom, also from The University of Hong Kong, who had entered our alma mater the year after me. After graduation, Eleanor had immediately returned to New York City to work for her Masters at Teachers' College around the time that I was taking my Secondary Teachers' Diploma Course in London. Eleanor, whose mother lived in New York state, had grown up near the city, so she could simply stay at home. By the summer of 1928 she had already earned her degree. I was very pleased to be met at Grand Central Station by her, and she had sensibly reserved a room for me at the then relatively new International House. After a solid night's rest, I faced the task of registering at the college the next day. That Saturday, in fact, was the very last day to register for the year, so I had made it just "by the skin of my teeth."

Teachers' College of Columbia University had the reputation of having a good system of advisers, and Dr Thomas Alexander became mine. He suggested the courses I might take after I had discussed my interests and hopes with him. The courses that interested me most were those on American education, partly because they would involve visits to schools outside New York City and New York state. My major was in teacher training, as I felt it was most needed in China and Hong Kong. Altogether I was in New York City for eight months. The first semester (or term) extended from September 1928 to the Christmas/New Year holidays, and the following term finished in May 1929. It was called an academic year.

That year, it was the Chinese students' turn to host the National Day celebrations at International House. Each year, one of the nationality groups would be responsible for the presentation of a show representing the culture of their country. The Chinese Students' Association was rather broke, with its accounts well in the red. To begin with, all the Chinese students living at "I House" met and elected a new committee. One member was Mr Liu Chieh, a Cantonese student who became chairman. He had been a student at Oxford, and I had met him briefly the previous year at the Chinese students' conference at Scorton, Yorkshire. In later years, Liu Chieh served in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nanjing, eventually becoming the last Chinese Ambassador to the United Nations sent by the then Nationalist Government. There was another student on the committee, Mr Daniel S.K. Chang, who was studying government. He first went to work in Nanjing but is now in Honolulu, his wife's home town. I was the third member.

Anyway, the three of us on the committee decided that we should put on some traditional Chinese plays. We finally decided on two. One was the legend of the Seventh Sister Fairy, portraying a fairy who falls in love with a cowherd. Liu acted as the cowherd, and a pretty little Chinese girl from Shanghai portrayed the Seventh Sister. Lucille Tang, who eventually became Mrs Liu Chieh, played the elder sister-in-law of the male lead. On stage the cowherd actually had a "cow" while another student, Teddy Chen (later Dr Theodore Chen of Los Angeles), played the part of the bull. Teddy, who was of rather hefty build, and another student zipped themselves into the bull's outfit to carry out their part. By fortunate accident, we found a manuscript for another play that we considered usable after a great deal of rewriting and revision. It was the translation of a well-known Chinese drama about a young girl, Hua Mu-lan, whose father was a retired general. With war and conscription looming, the government asked Mu-lan's father to re-enlist as an example to potential recruits. He was really too old and his son too young to go to war. Mu-lan volunteered to dress like a man and go to war as a "deputy" for her father.

For costumes, we visited New York's Chinatown, where there happened to be a theatrical troupe playing in a local theatre. We went backstage to talk to the Chinese actors and ask their advice. We told them that we were students doing this show up in International House and said it was important that we had nice, pretty costumes. The Chinese Opera Company cooperated and lent us brilliant, glittering,

practically new theatrical gear. I was chosen to play the part of Mu-lan. We began rehearsals under the supervision of a very capable American stage manager. On the night of the dress rehearsal it was extremely difficult to get everything organised because I had to wear the girl's costume for the first act, then struggle into a soldier's uniform, and at last change back again into female attire for the finale.

In the tale, Mu-lan was at war for 18 years, and none of her male comrades ever realised that she was not really one of them. When the war ended the soldiers and Mu-lan returned to the Emperor's palace. The Emperor wanted to reward Mu-lan with a high position, but she declined the offer, saying that all she wanted was to return home as quickly as possible. Accordingly, the little soldier was given a military escort to help speed her home with many gifts for the Hua family. When Mu-lan finally arrived home, she swiftly changed back into girl's clothing again, to the great surprise of her soldier companions.

It was a simple story, but for weeks we all worked terribly hard, learning the script and rehearsing our parts. This paid off in the end. We had a successful two-night run, playing to a full house on both nights. There was a small entrance fee that enabled us to pay for all expenses and to bring the Chinese Students' Association accounts out of the red, leaving it in a much healthier financial condition than we had found it. For many years there was a photograph of me, in military costume, on the wall of the upstairs lobby of International House. However, when I revisited New York in 1953, I noticed that the portrait had been taken down.

Prior to joining Lingnan University in 1929, I spent half a year visiting a number of well-known and reputable educational and social welfare institutions in several countries in order to broaden my knowledge of these allied subjects. In London the Tavistock Clinic, which was still quite new, often organised special lectures on mental health topics. The New Education Fellowship (NEF) did something similar, while at my request arrangements were made for me to visit famous schools such as Bedales and Frensham Heights. At Teachers' College in New York there were two courses, one each semester, called "American Education" for which we foreign students were advised to enroll. Because I believed in the value of school visitation, I deliberately allowed myself an additional six months in various countries during 1928 in order to attend two important international education conferences. One of these was organised by the

NEF (New Education Fellowships) and held at Elsinore, near Copenhagen; the other was an International Conference of Educational Associations, held in Geneva. We students could attend both, at which there were many interesting lectures and exhibits.

Soon after the Geneva conference, I went to the Ministry of Education in Berlin to seek permission and make the necessary arrangements to visit some notable schools in Germany. It happened that there were also some Japanese educators there with the same request. The German official asked if I would mind joining the Japanese group, as it would make the whole process much simpler. I considered the suggestion for a moment and immediately agreed. The official was a little puzzled at my willingness, because he knew there was already considerable tension between Japan and China at that time. The German ministry feared that I would simply refuse to go along with the Japanese. Instead, I said to him, "Education is international." I visited a few schools with the Japanese group, and they could see that I was keenly interested in education. As a result, when they heard that I also planned to spend some time seeing schools in Japan, several members of the party voluntarily gave me introductions to educational authorities and to school heads in that country. One introduction was to the Peeresses' School where the Japanese princesses and peeresses are educated, which is seldom open to visitors.

After leaving Berlin, I went to Frankfurt where I visited the classroom of an excellent German language teacher who, in local parlance, was referred to as a professor of German literature. I arrived well before his class was due to start, so he took me to his office and asked me to try to give him the English translation of any Chinese poem. I thought for a moment and tried to formulate the gist of a well-known poem written by the famous Tu Fu about his friend Li Po. Tu had praised Li's poetry as being "unmatched" and "out of the ordinary," saying it was pure and clear like one famous poet, yet deep and reclusive like another. Then Tu yearned for the trees, the river, and the evening clouds of his native village and wished that he could have another opportunity to sit in these surroundings together with his good friend Li Po and discuss poetry over a bottle of wine.

As I tried to explain the poem to the professor in English, he took down some notes. He then led me into his classroom, introduced me briefly to his class of senior secondary youngsters, and asked them to listen to a poem and then discuss it. The professor then proceeded to



read the Chinese poem, which he had cleverly translated into German verse. In the discussion that followed, one student said it had been written by Goethe, whose poetry they had been studying for some weeks. Another suggested the name of Goethe's friend to whom the poem referred, while a third even came up with an approximate date that Goethe was supposed to have written the poem.

A lively discussion ensued as the students allowed their imaginations to roam and developed ideas about the content and origins of this seemingly German poem. Finally the teacher interjected and explained to them, in German of course, that I had come from China and that at his request I had recited to him a Chinese poem. They had totally mistaken its origins, merely seeing it from their own perspective and presenting it as though it had been composed in their own language. At first the students were quite embarrassed at having made such a *faux pas*. However, the professor soon recaptured their enthusiasm and went on to explain that they must always remember that "poetry is universal" and that similar human emotions can be expressed in the literature of all cultures. The class immediately became aware that this simple class exercise had just taught them an important lesson. I have never forgotten this impressive incident, because it affected my own thinking and logic at the time. I was also grateful that I had learned a little German, which helped me to better understand and appreciate a live teaching experience of such simplicity and yet of such depth.

In my travels I also visited some schools in the Austrian capital, Vienna, and from there went on to Budapest to meet Eva, who was improving her skills in practical surgery in the Hungarian capital. She showed me the sights of the ancient "twin" cities—Buda and Pest—including the paintings and *objets d'art* in the museums. Eva explained the local history and the importance of the river Danube, all of which she could discourse upon quite informatively. She took me to a well-known restaurant that was full of local patrons, all of whom were volubly curious to see me dressed in a long Chinese gown. I was quite impressed that Eva could scold them in Hungarian for their bad manners. At the end of the meal we had a drink and, in typical Magyar fashion, Eva smashed her glass on the ground. She told me that it was to show how happy she was. After Budapest, I went back to the Far East via the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

When I arrived in Japan, I lived at the Nikka Gakkai, which

roughly means the Japanese-Chinese Educational Association. The accommodation was simple, but I particularly appreciated the staff's kindness in providing me with a guide, free of charge, who took me around on my school visitations. I noticed especially that in Japanese schools the more complicated words were written in Chinese characters. Although they were pronounced differently, I could at least read them. On the other hand, simple words such as prepositions used in textbooks for little children were printed in Kana, a phonetic language that looked just like shorthand to me. The Japanese teachers would often describe the delicious fruits and rich products of Manchuria to the children, who would then draw pictures of them. These were put up on classroom notice boards. Evidently the teachers had told them that when Manchuria became part of the new and expanding Japanese Empire, they would be able to enjoy all its succulent products. Frequently, when they wanted to befriend me, the local people told me that the Japanese and Chinese had the same culture and belonged to the same race.

After that month in Japan during 1929, I returned to Hong Kong. As soon as the winter holidays were over, I joined the faculty of the Department of Education at Lingnan University in Guangdong, not too far up the Pearl River from Hong Kong. There I could use much of the practical experience I had gained in the months of school visitations, as well as the many courses I had attended in London and New York. Some of my students from those days have continued to keep in touch with me, and one in particular—Dr Ho Chung-chung—became a famous educator in Hong Kong as principal of the True Light Middle School. Sometimes, when there was a good reason for a trip to Hong Kong, I could comfortably do the round trip within a weekend. I did this only infrequently, such as when there was a family reason to do so. I would take the train from Guangzhou to Hong Kong on Saturday afternoon and return by the night boat on Sunday evening. The following morning, Monday, I would have a 7:30 am lecture to give at the Education Department. If the night boat came in a little late, usually because of the tide, I would have to make haste and go directly from the Lingnan pier to the third floor of Martin Hall, where my lecture was to be delivered. Although my own quarters were close by at the other end of the building, I sometimes did not have time to go there first to freshen up before the lecture. All the same, I was never late for my teaching duties.

## Lingnan University

I first became interested in working at Lingnan University, which is situated near Guangzhou (Canton), the capital city of Guangdong Province in southern China, while still a postgraduate student at Columbia University Teachers' College in New York. That was during the academic year 1928-29. One of my classmates in New York, a Miss Paton, had just resigned her post as principal of the Union Normal School (in Chinese, Heep Wor) in Guangzhou, and asked if I would be interested in taking her place. This was the first job offer I ever had, and I told her I would think it over.

I consulted one of my friends at International House, Daniel Chang, who advised me to talk with another student there, Mr (later Dr) Y.K. Chu, who had gone to Teachers' College from Lingnan. Y.K. Chu was a solitary, hard-working student who normally kept his distance from others because he was busy developing his Ph.D thesis. However, I managed to corner him in the International House cafeteria and asked his advice. He told me that if I wanted to teach in Guangzhou, I should go to Lingnan. He was thoroughly convincing, even after I had questioned him at length on the matter. He encouraged me to pursue the matter while I was still in New York and suggested that I get in touch with Father Grant, who lived in the city and could arrange my application to teach at Lingnan. I then contacted Miss Paton to thank her but declined her offer.

In due course, Father Grant invited me to have lunch with him and two elderly ladies, both of whom were members of the Board of Trustees of the American Foundation for Lingnan University, headquartered in New York City. Afterwards, when he saw me home to International House on the bus, I asked him again about applying. He

pulled an application form from his inside coat pocket and told me to fill it in and mail it back to him, which I did. That was in the late spring of 1929.

In May I was busy with my final exams at Teachers' College. As soon as these were finished, I immediately set sail for England on the return leg of the Queen Mary's maiden voyage. This was then the largest and most modern passenger liner that had ever been built and was the pride of Cunard Lines. Prof Thomas Alexander had advised me to travel Tourist Class, a mode of travel about which I had never previously heard. It was a memorable trip, if only because of the size and splendour of the Blue Funnel Line vessel. Within several days, I arrived in London and went straight back to King's College, Strand, for the last few weeks of term. I also returned to the Lady Eleanor Hollis Cripplegate Foundation School for Girls for another month of practice teaching before taking the theoretical and practical examinations, both of which I passed without much difficulty. Just about that time, I received a wire from the vice-president of Lingnan University, Dr Y.L. Lee, inviting me to join the faculty (possibly as Dean of Women) and asking when I would be available. I wired back: "Accept, subject to parents' approval," and made it clear I would not be available until January 1930.

I referred the offer to my parents, asking for their consent, because it meant that I would be leaving home again and I wanted to feel that they, too, would be happy about the arrangement. Father queried why the offer was in the name of the vice-president and not the president. I told him that it was probably part of the deputy's job to deal with such matters. Mamma asked my old Chinese teacher, Mr T.Y. Leung, to write a nice letter to me in her name, so I felt then that she had fully forgiven me for having left Hong Kong again after the summer of 1928. I still intended to spend the next six months on professional travel, which meant that I would be away for a total of 18 months as we had originally agreed. It had not been an easy matter to obtain my parents' consent for an extended absence, and I certainly did not want to waste such a good opportunity to gain firsthand experience of seeing good educational practice. Because I had no real interest in the post of Dean of Women, I was relieved when they appointed someone else instead.

While in Japan on school visitations, my Father forwarded a letter to me from Mr Rankin, acting head of the Department of Education at Lingnan, asking when I would be arriving as he wanted to discuss my courses with me. I immediately replied, giving Mr Rankin the date I

expected to arrive in Hong Kong and adding that I would proceed to Guangzhou by night boat the following evening. I also gave him some idea of my training and the courses that I felt able to offer, so that he could plan my work even before my arrival.

I spent a few days each in north China, Nanjing, and Shanghai. However, the steamer from Shanghai to Hong Kong was one day late, so I reached home in the early morning, saw both Father and Lady Margaret (Mamma was away with Grace seeing Buddhist temples in India), and sailed that night for Guangzhou, where we docked about 7 am. I went straight to Lingnan University by sampan and was already proceeding along the wide road that ran from the pier to the campus when Dean Laird arrived to meet me. He kindly took me to his home for breakfast. Afterward, he and I called upon President W.K. Chung, Vice-President Y.L. Lee, and Mr Rankin. Everything for my teaching position was arranged in a day. I spent that night with the Lairds and remember that Mrs Laird had thoughtfully placed two heated bricks wrapped in brown paper at the foot of the bed to keep my feet warm. The damp cold in South China can be uncomfortable, though not as freezing as the winters in north China.

Since I had done all that was necessary for the time being, I returned to Hong Kong via Macau, where I wanted to thank Uncle Lew Yuk-lin for having urged me to stand firm on the Teachers' College issue the previous year. I also wanted to see his wife and son Arthur, as well as my widowed Fourth Aunt and her niece, Miss Lam Ling-chun, all of whom lived in the Portuguese enclave and were very close to me. I returned to Hong Kong by the night boat from Macau, arriving early the following morning.

Mamma and Grace soon came back from India and we had a brief but happy reunion. Before their return in early January 1930, I visited Diocesan Girls' School (DGS), which held so many memories of my formative years. During a conversation with the headmistress, Miss Sawyer, I remarked that graduates from the school who went abroad would be expected to know something of the Chinese language and culture if they used their Chinese name, whether they were pure Chinese or Eurasian. If they did not know about their culture and could not read and write Chinese, other people would not respect them and they could easily develop an inferiority complex. Miss Sawyer's reply was that the school's function was not to teach the girls Chinese; they

should learn it either before they came or after their graduation from DGS. I pointed out that the girls attended DGS for a period of ten years, from Lower Eight to Class One, and as Chinese was such a difficult language to absorb, it would be almost impossible to expect a student to learn much Chinese either before or after they left the school.

Miss Sawyer mentioned that in the case of our family, when we wanted to study Chinese or take Chinese exams, Mamma had asked Miss Skipton to find a Chinese teacher for us. Miss Sawyer also said that with regard to my sister, Florence, she had no knowledge of her Chinese ability, but her knowledge of English was poor. Altogether, she gave me the impression that she had a low opinion of Florence's development, though naturally I cannot remember the exact words that transpired between us. Florence was then 14 years old and in Class Two, the school's second highest, while Jean and Grace had left the school several years earlier. As I had an almost mother-child relationship with Florence, I felt that she must be quite unhappy in a school where the headmistress seemed to have such a poor opinion of her. I later discussed the matter with Mamma, and we felt that it might be a good idea to let Florence come up to Lingnan University with me to finish her secondary schooling and later to enter the university there instead of returning to DGS. Mamma was pleased with the idea. As Florence and I had both been sad at our three-year separation when I went abroad, I greatly looked forward to her company once more. I now very much regret that Mamma and I decided the matter without consulting Florence for her own reaction. We both assumed that it would be a good arrangement for her and that she would like it.

Florence was informed that after the Chinese New Year holidays—when most schools and colleges in Hong Kong and Guangzhou invariably herald the end of the autumn term and the beginning of a new one—she would be going to Guangzhou to study at Lingnan and staying with me instead of returning to DGS. Mamma and I had imagined that Florence would be happy with the idea. Sadly, I did not learn until much later that our good intentions had caused the poor girl a great deal of unhappiness. In fact, it was not until I read Florence's book, *My Memories*, written in later years and published in 1989, that I realised how miserable she had been during the months she spent with me at Lingnan University. To quote Florence:

There was a great problem welling up within me. At school in Hong Kong, I was known to be Eurasian and not pure Chinese. But my family, especially Irene, told me to say that I was pure Chinese. This puzzled and confused me and I felt it was dishonest. I found it difficult to mix with the other students, all of whom were of pure Chinese origin and I was continually teased about my appearance. I had light brown hair and brown eyes, my skin was fairer, whereas Chinese people have black hair and black eyes.

Chinese people can be very snobbish about race and I was made to feel an outcast. I wept through most of the first term and would hardly ever leave my sister's flat (I had to stay with her instead of in the girls' hostel, which made me even more 'different'). Lingnan was a disaster as far as I was concerned.

I very much regret that I had caused her such suffering. I had noticed that she frequently wept, but assumed it was only because she could not keep up with her knowledge and comprehension of the Chinese written language. We had found her a coach and other assistance, but I failed to realise or notice that this was insufficient.

About 60 years after the event, when I first read Florence's words, I was stunned. I had never fully realised how miserable I had made her. It was then 1990 and we were both in the twilight of our years, but I immediately telephoned Florence to apologise for having unintentionally caused her so much suffering back then. Of course, I had realised during the period 1930-32 that Florence was unhappy about certain things, but I thought that it was chiefly the exams she had to pass that concerned her. I had simply not realised that the racial question bothered her so much. Nevertheless, I am thankful that, despite the unhappiness I caused her by giving her wrong advice when she was a girl, we still remained the closest of sisters. At the same time, despite those earlier feelings of insecurity, I am glad that Florence proved she was by no means "ugly" or "stupid," and has done wonders in her life that should have removed all her latent misgivings.

After the Chinese Lunar New Year of early 1930, Florence and I travelled up the Pearl River to Guangzhou to begin our stay at Lingnan University, she as a pre-matriculated student and I as a lecturer. Mamma sent one of our family amahs with us to look after the cooking, laundry, and other housework. As Florence needed to pass her entrance exams, I found her two tutors to help with some subjects. For Chinese, I found a capable faculty wife who patiently helped Florence to the point that she

eventually passed Lingnan University's entrance exams in that subject. Florence had always exhibited an extra-nervous disposition and had an inferiority complex about her ability in mathematics ever since the lower classes at DGS. However, at Lingnan she persevered and the tutor, a mature male undergraduate, patiently helped her through the maths syllabus so that she finally passed with flying colours all the subjects required to enter the university. I hoped this would remove at least one of her problems.

I have already referred to the joke that some people at home played on Florence when she was quite young. They told her that she was not really Mamma's child, that her mother was actually a Shantung woman who had died soon after she was born, and that the doctor had brought her to Mamma, who took pity on her and reared her as if she was really one of us. Even some of the amahs thought it was a good tale and amplified the story in more detail. The story had been so well made up that it sounded true, and Florence believed it. I told Florence soon after this "fairy tale" began circulating among us that it was not true. I thought she understood and accepted my explanation, but obviously this was not so. Before I left for England at the end of 1926, when Florence was 11 years old, I once again explained the situation carefully to her and thought that this time she fully understood and believed me. Unfortunately, this was again not so. Hence in 1930 or 1931, when she was with me at Lingnan University, she again asked: "Am I really Mamma's daughter?"

I told her: "Of course you are. Didn't I explain this to you before I left for England?" Plaintively, Florence said: "I know you did, but I thought you said it just to comfort me, otherwise why am I so ugly and all of you so pretty?" She was suffering from adolescent acne and thought herself ugly. "Also, you are all so clever and I'm so stupid," she said. This was her inferiority complex showing through. She had no self-confidence, and her inability to properly understand maths was then still bothering her. Over the years, I reassured her again and again, and finally she did come to realise that it had all started as a joke, albeit a sick one. It was a piece of needless family humour that did her great harm during her formative, impressionable years.

When I joined Lingnan I was first appointed as a lecturer in the Education Department to train secondary teachers. Dr Y.K. Chu, whom I had known and consulted in New York, was actually the department



head, but during his absence at Teachers' College, while working for his Ph.D, Mr Rankin deputised for him. For that reason I first discussed the courses I would be called upon to offer with Mr Rankin. As I had just returned from two years of postgraduate study, Mr Rankin asked me to offer two courses, one on the philosophy of education and the other on educational methods. I was also to be in charge of the students' practice teaching sessions. According to English and American standards, practice teaching should consist of observation, participation, and practice.

Lingnan University was fortunate to have three subsidiary educational facilities on campus: a primary school, a secondary school (called in China a middle school), and a school for overseas students, whose parents had sent them back to learn firsthand something of their Chinese language, culture, and heritage. The school for overseas students had to be flexible, as it was necessary to group them according to their academic standards, especially in Chinese language ability, instead of by age.

Before I joined Lingnan, the university students undergoing training simply went to the primary school principal and asked for a part-time paid job for the semester. They may or may not have received any supervision from the principal or from the regular teacher of that class or subject. When I took charge of practice teaching, I went about it in a more professional way, according to what I had learned in my supervision of practice teaching courses at Teachers' College. I also made good use of the three on-campus schools; I consulted their heads and took or sent students to observe the best teachers in action. I also contacted the many well-known schools in Guangzhou and took my students to visit them, thus helping them learn much about educational theory and practice. The students still had to do their own practice teaching at the primary school. From time to time, I would sit at the back of the classroom to observe them in action. Later, at least a couple of times during the semester and more often if necessary, I would discuss their classroom practice with them based on what I had observed.

As I had not yet done much classroom teaching myself, I asked the secondary and primary school heads to let me teach a class in each of those areas, so that I could become fully conversant with classroom problems and could lecture in the methods course with firsthand experience. Of course teaching in the subsidiary schools was all volunteer work, with no additional remuneration.

I started teaching at Lingnan early in 1930. As the summer holidays approached at the end of the school year, the boys would be promoted to a higher class and take geometry instead of algebra. Before the holidays began the principal asked me whether I wanted to stay with the same class, in which case I would have to teach a different branch of mathematics. If I wanted to stay with the subject I had so carefully prepared, I would have to take a different class. I gave the matter some thought and decided that I preferred to stay with the same boys. I had studied them rather carefully, knew their idiosyncrasies and personalities, and felt that I could help them progress rather than trying to acquaint myself with a new class of 30-odd students. After 18 months with the same group, my department head, Dr Chu, requested that I give up teaching in the secondary school. After all, I had been appointed to teach in the college, and the work I was currently engaged in took up too much of my time. Needless to say, both the secondary school boys and I were sorry that I had to quit teaching them.

It happened that Lingnan had an excellent system of organising students from all parallel classes in any particular year level into various groups, known as sheh, each of which had a special name assigned to it. If a student repeated a class, he or she would then belong to two groups. Such students would remain in the same sheh, which was almost like a fraternity, not only for the rest of their school careers, but also for life. Just as I gave up teaching my maths class, the staff adviser of the boys' group called the Ching Sheh had for some unknown reason resigned. The boys earnestly requested me to be their class adviser. At first, the principal was hesitant to let a woman undertake this task simply because there was no precedent, but the boys were persistent and the principal finally approved the move. The boys held meetings, which I had to attend, and I sometimes organised picnics for them at the Pine Grove just behind the campus and tried to advise them on non-academic or general "life" problems whenever such topics came up. We got on well together and even today, in Hong Kong or elsewhere, whenever their Ching Sheh holds a meeting, they always ask me to join them. If I pass through San Francisco on my way home to San Diego, those who live there will organise a special dinner party to welcome me. It has always been a very touching relationship.

I recall three students in my maths class whom I felt needed special attention in one way or another. I was glad I could help them because each made good in later life; they became my three *protégés*.

The first was Tong Chung-kwan, who was easily my best maths student, but I happened to notice that he did not take all the subjects. It was a habit of mine to try to understand the personal circumstances of each student who seemed to need special attention, so I questioned Chung-kwan on his family affairs. I found that his father was only a foreman at the Ho Tung Engineering Workshop in Hong Kong (which had been donated by my father to the university), so he could not afford to give his children much of a post-primary education. His first wife, Chung-kwan's mother, had died; after remarrying, he had other younger children by his second wife, so he could not afford to send Chung-kwan to a secondary school.

Fortunately, Chung-kwan had a paternal uncle who was a clerk in the offices of the American Foundation of Lingnan. The uncle realised that the lad was bright, so he took him in to live with him at Lingnan. However, the uncle couldn't afford to pay the fees for Chung-kwan to become a full-time secondary school student, so he asked the Lingnan middle school to allow him to take just the three main subjects: Chinese, English, and mathematics. The uncle also asked Dr Henry, head of the American Foundation, to allow Chung-kwan to work there as an office boy, but to let him have time off to attend classes. I could see from this that the uncle had indeed done the best he could for Chung-kwan, but I also realised that the boy was definitely university material, and it would be a great waste of talent if he never had the chance to go on to college (as would have been the case if he took only the three subjects).

I gave the matter my most careful and serious consideration and discussed it first with Chung-kwan's uncle. Then he and I spoke to Dr Henry and with the administration of the secondary school. I was delighted when they agreed to my suggestion to let the boy study full-time and then attend to his chores for the Foundation after the school day ended. The school normally exempted the children of staff members from paying fees. This privilege was generously extended to Chung-kwan, although he was only a staff member's nephew. From the 1930 autumn semester, Chung-kwan became a regular student and continued to do excellent work in my maths class and in the other subjects as well. Later, after I left Lingnan to go to England with my father, I asked a friend to help oversee his education. Some minor problems arose, and the boy went to Hong Kong to complete the last year of his secondary schooling. Fortunately, he was able to win a scholarship to the Engineering Faculty of The University of Hong Kong.

After he had graduated with a B.Sc degree, he worked as an engineer. During World War II, Chung-kwan was in Guangzhou, where the main utility company could not generate electricity because there was no fuel. Someone thought of the idea of burning rice husks to produce at least a little power. With his knowledge of engineering, my former student put the idea into practice and the people of Guangzhou were delighted to again have electricity. After the war, Chung-kwan worked for Shell Oil in Hong Kong for many years, where one of his duties was to go aboard each cargo vessel that came into port and advise the engineers there regarding which fuel to use and he would supply it to them by the tank. He also showed them how to care for their engines. He worked with the same company all the way until his retirement.

My second *protégé* had a surname that consisted of two characters, Au Yang, and a given name, Hong (Kang in Mandarin). He was absent from my class the first term I was there (spring 1930), and the other students told me that he had been suspended for a year because the standard of his academic work was too low. I could not understand this because his father was a mathematics teacher in the secondary school, and I felt that the boy should at least be intelligent. When he returned to school in September, I kept a close eye on him and asked him about his family circumstances. He told me that his mother had died and that his father had remarried. Au Yang was an excellent athlete and goalkeeper for his football team. In the Sunday morning newspaper there was generally some little write-up about his success in preventing the opposition from scoring, so his team invariably won. Because Au Yang lived simply for that glory and that alone, he neglected to attend to his regular studies. I spoke to him seriously and then took him in hand. The boy was very patriotic, and I counselled him that when he finished school, with his excellent physique it might be worthwhile for him to go for military training. In those years China really needed well-trained military people. In due course, after his secondary education, Au Yang applied and was accepted by the army training school in Nanjing, the city in which I later worked. Eventually he fought well in the defence of Nanjing. After the war ended, he was sent to the United States for a years for further training.

I was able to help the last of my three *protégés* in quite a different way. I noticed that Lee Shing-chee, who was then in tenth grade, had hair that had gone completely grey, so that his classmates nicknamed him "the white-headed boy." I wanted to know if there was

some psychological reason for this and discovered that indeed there was. Lee's father was an elderly Chinese businessman in Manila who was so afraid that Lee would not be able to choose a good wife for himself that he had found a girl from their village and arranged for the young couple to become engaged. When I cross-examined Lee about his personal affairs, he told me the story, adding that the young lady had only a primary school education. He was worried about how he could eventually spend the rest of his life with a woman so poorly educated. I saw the matter from his point of view, especially as he was a sensitive, introverted young man. I asked him why he did not talk frankly with his father and explain his concern. He told me he did not have the courage to do so and felt that even if he did broach the subject, his father would do nothing about it. After careful consideration, I wrote to Lee's father, explaining that the young man would never be happy about the arrangement and that it would be better for all concerned to annul the engagement. To my pleasant surprise, the father took my advice.

Some months after that, I left Lingnan in order to accompany my father and Lady Margaret on their Golden Honeymoon trip and did not think any more about young Lee Shing-chee's close brush with marriage. In 1952, when my United Nations Economic, Social, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) fellowship was granted, I had the chance to go to Manila. As I had Shing-chee's address, I looked him up. At the time, he was principal of a Chinese secondary school in Baguio, a Philippine city situated high in the mountains of northern Luzon. I found that he had been doing an excellent job there, both for the school and in writing and directing plays in which his students acted. When we met, and much to my surprise, "the white-headed boy" had become a "black-haired man," although he had been through extremely difficult times during World War II, when the Japanese occupying forces had treated him badly. In his own life he was happy, because he had found a wife to his liking who made a suitable life's companion for him.

One day as I was returning to Lingnan after taking my students to Guangzhou for a school observation visit, I heard that the entire student body, from primary grades through college, was assembled at Swazey Hall, which was named after an early benefactor of Lingnan. The meeting concerned news that the Sino-Japanese War, which was then being fought, was getting worse. The student body felt that it should show its patriotism in some tangible way. General Ma Chan-san's troops had been heroically fighting against the Japanese invaders and the

students wished to express their support for their countrymen by starting a large campaign to raise funds from the residents of Guangzhou to send to General Ma. I sat and listened to the discussions for some time and was impressed by the genuine patriotism of these young students. Eventually, one of them proposed that the entire institution stop classes immediately and start fund-raising. The organisers of the meeting tried to persuade them to be patient as preparations were not yet complete, but their enthusiasm was so strong that those who advocated suspending classes would not give in. I was a relative newcomer to the institution. Although I admired their sentiments, I also thought that the organisers were correct in suggesting that they be patient a little longer.

Screwing up my courage, I asked to be allowed to speak to the assembled students from the platform. I told them that I admired their patriotism, but pointed out that as the receipt books had not yet been printed, people might not be willing to donate. Also, it would take the organisers time to plan a proper fund-raising campaign, in order to generate the maximum support from the citizens of Guangzhou. I assured them that when all was ready, the university authorities would certainly grant their request to have classes suspended to enable them to carry out their patriotic mission. I was glad that the students saw the validity of my arguments and resumed their studies for a few more days. Before the meeting closed, the assembly elected an ad hoc committee, with me as treasurer. I felt that it was my duty to accept the responsibility and do my best. In due course, I found out that the organisers did, indeed, set out extremely careful and comprehensive plans for the fund-raising campaign. I wrote about this in my 1953 final report for the UNESCO fellowship, which reads:

I well remember in 1931 when I was in the Education Department of Lingnan University, I was very much impressed by the organisational ability demonstrated by the secondary school students there. There had been a grave national crisis, and the students decided to organise a financial campaign to raise funds for the war effort. They carefully marked out a map of Guangzhou, street by street, and each class was assigned responsibility for particular streets. On a certain day, the entire student body went into the city, house by house, to make their appeals and collect donations. The results were astounding (they even went into the city hospital and approached each patient hospitalised there).

It happened that in those years, because so many Chinese banks were printing banknotes, for ordinary transactions the community at large decided they would not accept any of the notes except those from about three leading banks. Consequently, when the students went out to raise funds, they had to ask for either cheques or cash in the form of 20 cent coins, which were handed around either loose or in rolls. That evening some of the students from the primary school came to me, begging me to take over the funds that they had been able to raise as they were afraid the money might be stolen overnight. So I agreed to help them. I would first count the amount each brought to me and give him or her a signed receipt for the correct amount. After they had gone, I would carefully count the loose change, which I then rolled into \$10 rolls (in Chinese currency, of course). I had a large desk with three long drawers on either side. I emptied two of them and used them to hold the rolls of cash as well as any other money in the form of cheques that had been brought to me. The drawers had no locks but it was perfectly safe to leave the money there just for one night. As my quarters were on the upper floor on a building just adjacent to the university's administration building, Grant Hall, all I had to do the following morning was to carry my two drawers over to the next building, where the university bank was housed.

During the early 1930s, the student bodies of the three leading educational institutions in the Pearl River delta region, the Sun Yat-sen and Lingnan Universities in Guangzhou and The University of Hong Kong, decided to organise a series of inter-university athletic meets so that students of the three institutions could get to know each other. In those days The Chinese University of Hong Kong had not yet been established. Although there were a couple of other colleges in Guangzhou, they were much less prestigious than the two above-mentioned ones, so they were not included in the programme. The university authorities evidently thought it was a good idea and encouraged it. In the meet held at The University of Hong Kong in 1931, Lingnan appointed me "Official Chaperon" for the women students who went to Hong Kong for the event. Incidentally, my sister Florence was one of them, and I was happy and proud of her achievement.

Although I was deeply involved in the life of Lingnan University, there was still much happening at home within the Ho family. Jean, my sixth younger sister, and her husband Billy Gittins had two children. The elder one, Betty (Elizabeth), I remember especially well from the

moment she was born. On March 12th, 1930, Lingnan University had a holiday because it was the anniversary of the death of Dr Sun Yat-sen, "Father of the Chinese Republic," so Florence and I had gone downriver to Hong Kong to visit our family. Jean was in hospital awaiting her first child, and I was glad to see that both her mother-in-law and Mamma were there waiting together in the hospital on fairly good speaking terms with each other. As the actual time for the delivery approached, Mamma, with the full permission of Jean's doctors, was in the delivery room with her, wearing a white gown and mask as she always did. Billy was pacing up and down, up and down in the corridor, trying to control his anxiety. In those days, especially in Hong Kong, it was unheard of to allow a husband into the delivery room to help his wife during labour.

Because I had to go home to Idlewild for dinner and then take the night boat back to Guangzhou for my classes at Lingnan the next morning, I was anxious to get going. I felt it must be time for the baby to be born. I went and peeped through the keyhole of the delivery room door just as Mamma held up the bloodied newborn baby. I did not even have time to find out whether it was a boy or a girl, but I knew that Jean and the baby, Betty, were safe. As planned, I went home and returned to Guangzhou on the night boat. I was always fond of Betty, and she became one of my pet nieces. By nature a tidy little girl, she always put her toys away after playing with them. One day, before she could really talk, someone spilt some water on the floor in the living room at our Peak home. Betty pointed to it and in her babyish way called out, "eijah, eijah"—her word for "dirty." The amah knew what she meant and said: "Oh, you're so fussy," then handed her a rag and told her to go and clean it up herself. Betty just toddled over and wiped it up. This was before she could talk or even walk properly.

Just before the summer holidays in 1931, Lady Margaret's lichee trees at her farm in Sheung Shui had an extremely good season. She was pleased with the occurrence, and when the itinerant workers came to harvest the crop she asked them to save one tree and leave the fruit on it. Florence and I left Lingnan University for the long holiday at about that time. Instead of taking the boat back to Hong Kong as we normally did, we took the Kowloon-Canton Railway from Guangzhou as far as Sheung Shui and then went by rickshaw to our Tung Ying Hok Po Farm. We first had lunch with Lady Margaret and immediately afterwards she led us out into her orchard. She took us to the particular tree that had been saved for our benefit. It was a wonderful sight to behold, with all



its branches weighed down by bunches of succulent dark red fruit. She allowed us to choose and pick a couple of bunches ourselves. Lady Margaret had already had the farmhands fill buckets with icy cold water from her deep wells and we were invited to immerse our bunches of lichees in the water and let them soak for a while. We were then told to take out the fruit and found their thin brittle skins easy to peel. The flavour was delicious, in fact it was heavenly. People who do not live in the tropics and have never tasted fresh lichees do not know what they are missing. The tinned variety is passable, but in the canning process they usually use too much sugar. Even lichees bought from the market are usually at least a day old and are no comparison in taste and texture with those plucked straight from the tree. I for one will forever be grateful to Lady Margaret for having arranged that luxury for us.

In the late spring of 1932 I received a letter from Father in which he said he was planning to go with Lady Margaret to Europe for their Golden Honeymoon. At the end he said: "It would be so nice if you could have gone with us." I knew this was his way of telling me he really wanted me to accompany him. However, knowing of the way I was committed to my job, Father was not sure whether I would be willing or even able to go. So he left the decision up to me. Now it happened that a colleague of mine, the deputy principal of the secondary school, Mr C.K. Yeung, had dropped in to visit. I showed him Father's letter and asked for his advice. We walked out on to the verandah just as the sun was setting, and almost simultaneously we both thought of a famous Chinese saying: "When the sun has set, where will you be able to find it?" I had previously told Mr Yeung how in the summer of 1928 Father had been instrumental in helping me get away to Teachers' College, for which I was truly grateful to him. I felt that he needed me or at least wanted me to go with him, but did not venture to ask outright, so he had sent this feeler to see how I would react.

Further, I confided to Mr Yeung that after working at Lingnan for just over two years I had observed that most of the capable people there had their Ph.D degrees. Anyone who did not have that qualification usually could not afford it or did not have the brains for it. I felt that if I went with Father, he might be willing to let me stay on to work for my Ph.D after I had finished my job for him. However, I was also greatly concerned about even thinking of leaving my job at Lingnan in the middle of a semester. Mr Yeung told me that the university might be able to make other arrangements and strongly advised me to walk across the

lawn and talk the matter over with the president, Dr W.K. Chung. Dr Chung was sympathetic and understanding. In fact, he ventured the opinion that I should go if my father really wanted me to. Being an older person himself, he probably understood Father's sentiments better than I did. He also liked the idea that I might try to seize the opportunity to work for my Ph.D and told me that if I did go, other arrangements could be made for my work to be taken over by someone else, adding that I would be welcome to return any time I wanted to. Later, when I spoke to Dean Laird, he confirmed that "the latch on the door has been left open."

When my students heard that I was going away, their class organisation, the Ching Sheh, gave me a touching farewell tea party. I had only been their sheh adviser for about a year, but we had all got on well together. There were always two classes in each sheh: the "A" and the "B" classes. I had taught the B class five maths lessons a week for 18 months; though I never actually taught the "A" class, I had attended all their joint group meetings and also been out with them for picnics. I always tried my best to be a friend and class adviser to them all. After the farewell tea party many members volunteered to make a short speech. It was quite touching to hear their honest remarks and regrets that I was leaving them. One speech especially impressed me, because instead of talking politely as the others had done, the lad said something to the effect: "I want to 'scold' Miss Ho, because she is deserting all of us, going away and leaving us all behind." I appreciated his honest and frank remarks and have never forgotten them. I felt quite guilty leaving them, but I had to weigh my loyalties on both sides. As Father was already 70 years old and in frail health, as it seemed then, I never dreamt that he would live until he was over 90. He seemed to need me just then. Had I turned him down, there might not have been another opportunity for me to repay him for the special help he had given me when I needed it most.

I honestly hoped that I might be able to persuade Father to allow me to stay on and work for my Ph.D, as the degree seemed important if I wanted to make any higher contribution in my profession. Even if I might not be able to continue helping this particular group of students, I would be better qualified to help students generally in future. I tried to reply to the boys' speeches in this latter vein. Although I had not fully realised it then, this group—whom I had been able to "touch" directly, but so briefly—fully repaid me for the little help I had given each of

them in one way or another for the rest of our lives. It is interesting that the student who scolded me for deserting the class went on to become one of my good friends in later life. His family were among the owners of the well-known Wing On Co in Hong Kong. In time, he joined the staff of the San Francisco branch of that emporium. Whenever I passed through that city, he and his fellow Ching Sheh members would entertain and help me in every possible way. Unfortunately he died fairly young, but his friends and I still remember him well.

Another of those students whom I must mention was in my maths class and was also one of the Ching Sheh leaders. He was well-mannered and quite good looking. Even when I was there, I knew he had an eye for my sister Florence. After I left Lingnan, Florence moved to the Women's Hostel, and she and the boy remained good friends. The match never materialised, and I always wondered why. The student later went to live in San Francisco where he became highly successful in business. I saw him there often in later years, and he was always one of the most energetic members of the Ching Sheh in organising his fellow students to entertain me. I gave him Florence's address in the United Kingdom, and he eventually visited her and her husband, to whom he introduced himself as "one of Florence's first boyfriends." It seems that at Lingnan he had been too shy to press his suit with my sister. More to the point, I believe he was probably too polite and well-mannered. I am glad that both are doing well in their later years and are still friends across the continents.

## Doctoral Studies

**I**n 1930 Mamma established two "free schools" for girls. As the name implies, they charged absolutely nothing for tuition and even provided pupils with their books. The first to be opened was the Po Kok Free School in Macau. A few months later, the Po Kok Free School in Wan Chai on Hong Kong Island also began classes. Po means "precious" and Kok "awakening." Apart from missionary establishments, these were the first free schools for girls to be established in the colony. All the other charity schools run by Chinese organisations had been for boys only, a situation that made Mamma quite indignant.

When the schools first opened, hundreds of girls applied, and Mamma participated in the selection of the lucky few who could be accommodated. One of her assistants noted that Mamma wanted to select those who seemed the most needy, whereas her chief assistant tried to choose the brightest. Naturally, Mamma also liked to have bright students, so those who were poor but bright had the best chance of getting in. The school started with the first grade. Because children from poor families usually had no opportunity of undergoing any previous schooling, there were no academic tests required as would have been the case in some schools for wealthier families, whose children might have been to kindergarten. The interviewers used a few simple questions to try to assess the young person's general intelligence. Around this time, Mamma also established a Buddhist seminary for adult women who wanted to study more about Buddhism.

When Father celebrated his golden anniversary with Lady Margaret in 1931, he gave each of his two wives \$100,000 to spend on whatever charity they liked. Mamma first searched hard for a suitable

site and then found an architect to build the Tung Lin Kok Yuen Temple. The temple's title was based on Father's name, Tung, and Mamma's Buddhist name, Lin Kok. It was a beautiful modern building erected in Shan Kwong Road, Happy Valley. This gesture was Mamma's way of giving the girls some education and also spreading her own religion, Buddhism, in which she had the greatest faith. Later she moved her seminary and the Po Kok School into the temple, which was officially opened on Buddha's birthday in 1935.

In those days, because education was my major field of study, Mamma asked me to try to help improve the school when I was in Hong Kong. Over the decades, I have occasionally been able to assist in various ways. For instance, it was by fortunate accident that I was able to advise the board of directors to have the school converted from a private establishment into a government-subsidised school just before construction of the secondary school building, which meant a guarantee of substantial financial aid and professional advice for the project. Most of the school's policy is decided by the board, of which I have been a member since its formation in 1938, having been nominated in Mamma's will. But since I have lived in California for the past two and a half decades, I have not been able to attend all the meetings. I can only participate actively in the school's affairs when I return to Hong Kong, which is about every other year. Fortunately, I have managed to solicit the aid of good people to support me. Recently I appointed a proxy, Miss Rachel Wong, a devout and knowledgeable Buddhist as well as a capable business woman. When she first attended the board meeting as my proxy, the members wisely elected her to serve in her own right as well. Now that Miss Wong has emigrated to Canada, I have requested that the principal of Po Kok Secondary School serve as my proxy in perpetuity.

In 1932 Father asked me to go with him and his first wife, Lady Margaret, as his secretary on their Golden Honeymoon. We went by boat from Hong Kong, travelled via the Suez Canal to England, and then later crossed over to Europe. This was an excellent opportunity for me to get to know Father better, something I had not been able to do except during that all-too-brief week in the summer of 1928 when he invited me to visit him in Macau. Before that, I had always missed the closeness that is natural between father and daughter. I vividly remember that when I visited Tientsin in 1926 and saw the way Uncle M.T. Liang and

his children treated each other like equals, discussing all sorts of topics together, I was indeed impressed. We would never have dared to argue with our parents in such a way. That experience in Tientsin braved me considerably so that in 1932, while out walking with Father in Switzerland, I said to him that we never had much chance of getting to know him when we were children. He tried to blame it on Mamma and said she always told him we were too busy with our studies. I pointed out that by then we were all grown up, adding that I hoped he would be able to find more time to spend with us.

Soon after that and to my complete surprise, Father presented me with two verses of a Chinese poem he had written for me to include in my autograph album. Although the book has long been lost, the free translation of the verses, which I distinctly remember, is:

(You are) fond of learning, industrious, and modest,  
 Born intelligent, outstanding, glorifies my family.  
 After studying and teaching you again pursue studies,  
 You are indeed a hero, and your ambition deserves praise.  
 This time studying in the English capital,  
 When your studies have been completed you should return  
 home quickly.  
 Remember that your parents are advanced in age,  
 Always bear in mind that you should consider both loyalty  
 and filial affection.

At times during that trip, I was as close as I ever became to my Father and Lady Margaret. We enjoyed the fun of doing things together, and even minor events took on a special meaning and sometimes became adventures. This was the case when it was decided that I should take my parents for a ride on the London Underground railway. Even in those days, the lengthy system was quite intimidating to strangers such as my parents, although I myself had become quite familiar with its routes during my student days in 1927-28 and 1929. Being more familiar with the city, I suggested that the three of us go by Underground from Park Lane to Picadilly Circus and then take a simple lunch in one of the nearby Chinese restaurants. It was Father, with his love of adventure, who had originally expressed a wish to try a trip on the tube train. I planned it very carefully and remember that it was a bright sunny day when the three of us walked from the Park Lane Hotel to the adjacent station to commence the excursion. The first station, Park Lane, gave us no problem whatsoever because passengers were conveyed from street level down to the platforms by elevator, or by lift as the English say.

The tube trains themselves were rather superb for those days, and the journey went smoothly until we arrived at Picadilly Circus station. Here we were confronted with a series of moving staircases (escalators) as we made our way back up to the surface. Whenever we had a section of escalator to negotiate, we had to work as a team. Both Father and Lady Margaret experienced some difficulty in negotiating the moving stairs. The whirring steps always seem to mesmerise those who are confronted with such machinery for the first time. Therefore, it fell to me to help each of them separately on to the revolving stairs, then make sure that I moved off the escalator first to help them alight. I managed to do this without mishap, but with considerable amusement. However, it really was a great responsibility. After lunch at the Chinese restaurant, we repeated the underground escapade in the opposite direction, and the three of us were actually triumphant by the time we arrived back at the hotel. We had done it!

It was also during 1932 that Eva and I decided it would be an experience to be presented at the royal court. I made enquires about the possibility through Mme Quo Tai-chi, wife of the Chinese ambassador, who was quite willing to help us. Thus Eva and I eventually appeared at the court of Queen Mary, wife of King George V, at Buckingham Palace. For this most special occasion each of us wore full-length evening gowns with long sleeves, the whole made with an English fabric called lamey. Eva's dress was white and mine pink, and both had long sweeping trains trimmed with a wide velvet border and embroidered with sequins. We each wore some ostrich feathers as head gear, proper long white gloves, and held a large ostrich feather fan. We each also wore a pair of long diamond earrings with four stones on each side, the bottom pair of diamonds being pear-shaped. They were first made to order, as instructed by Mamma, in 1927. However, five years later they were reset with additional stones in an artistic setting, according to Lady Margaret's specifications. They were skillfully made by a Jewish jeweller in London, H.K. Lewis, whom my parents had known for decades.

Eva and Grace, who had their own flat in London, frequently visited us at the Park Lane Hotel. During one of these visits Eva told me that two medical graduates, Dr S.C. Chia and Dr M.K. Yue—who had been the young honorary secretary of the Hong Kong University's Students' Union Council when I first joined HKU in 1921—were in London and had asked to see me. Dr Yue had arrived from Fukien early

for the autumn term and was preparing to study in Edinburgh, Scotland, for his FRCS (Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons). A few days later I had dinner alone with M.K. Yue. He mentioned that it seemed like a strange act of fate had brought us to London at the same time. Actually, we had been reasonably friendly fellow students during our university days. He asked me what I thought of him. I told him quite frankly that I admired him very much, but he said that was not what he wanted to hear. He then asked me if I cared for him. Actually, I had come to regard him as a good friend and told him as much. He said that was not enough and finally asked me outright if I loved him. I could only answer that I had never thought of him that way. Before we went our separate ways that evening, he asked me to think over our relationship and tell him later whether I could ever love him. I promised him that I would.

I was extremely busy in those days, taking Father's telephone messages, handling his correspondence, and dealing with his telegrams to and from Hong Kong and Shanghai (most of which were in codes that I had to decipher or encrypt using Bentley's Telegraphic Code). Although he was on holiday, he still kept control of his affairs at long distance, frequently telling his staff in Hong Kong or Shanghai to buy or sell various shares or bonds. However, despite my busy schedule, I was able to see M.K. several times. I had to do a good deal of soul searching before I gave him a reply to his question about my feelings. Now, with hindsight, I feel that because I did not know enough about his circumstances at home, perhaps I should never have given him any encouragement at all. It probably would never have worked for either of us.

At the time I had not been able to think about the matter objectively, although I could not deny that I was strongly attracted to M.K. I expressed my doubts and told him that it would be awkward for me to fit into his home environment, as I did not know his family's dialect. I felt that for the educational work in which I had trained, it would be difficult for me to work in Putien, his home town in Fujian province, although he assured me that a solution could somehow be found. From his friend Dr Chia, I had learnt that M.K. was a devout Christian, and I told him that I could not share these religious beliefs. He answered by saying: "I won't jam religion down your throat."

Despite my putting obstacles in the way, M.K. persisted. He obviously felt that there was still a chance of my accepting him if he



could find solutions to all my doubts. During the course of our discussions about the circumstances we were in, he finally confided to me that some eight years earlier his family had arranged for his engagement to a Miss Liu. This would have been around 1924, when he returned to Putien from Hong Kong after his graduation but before his postgraduate internship. He told me that he never wanted to marry the girl; therefore he sent her to Shanghai so that she could undertake university training in social work and would be able to make a living on her own. However, until then and partly because of her family connections, he never had the courage to tell her of his intention to break the engagement. It was a sad situation on both sides. For example, when she heard that he had decided to go to Edinburgh, Miss Liu had taken time off from her studies in Shanghai and went to Putien with the hope of seeing him before he left. Unfortunately for her, she was too late, as he had already gone. The unhappy girl wrote him a letter regretting that he seemed to be getting "further and further" away from her.

When M.K. told me about the engagement, I felt that I could not possibly consider his proposal to me and told him so. However, he was determined to overcome my resistance. He was adamant that should I not accept him he would still never marry the other girl, saying that had he intended to marry her he would not have let the engagement hang on for eight years. He told me plaintively that the ongoing engagement forced upon him was "like a tumour that had to be removed by surgery."

Eventually I stupidly came to accept his point of view. We had much in common, enjoyed each other's company, and shared a mutual respect and love. The future seemed ours, but still we kept it to ourselves. He had his work cut out for him in the FRCS, while I was to begin work for my own Ph.D course in London. When I went off with my parents to Paris, Berlin, and Switzerland, he stayed in London and was still there for a few days after my return. Before he left for Edinburgh I gave him a Longines watch that I had bought in Switzerland; at the same time I had also purchased an Omega timepiece for Eva. Then just before his departure, on the spur of the moment, we happened to be passing a photographer's shop and went in to have our picture taken together.

M.K. was an avid letter writer. After he went to Edinburgh he invariably wrote three times a week on specific days, and his letters to me would arrive in the first post the very next morning. I eagerly looked

forward to them and sometimes found time to reply. I kept those letters for a number of years, but latterly destroyed them without reading them again. At any rate, he asked me to visit him in Edinburgh for a few days at Christmas and reserved a room for me with his landlady. We had a delightful time together taking in the sights of that picturesque Scottish city and also visited Mrs Fisher and her family. She was the widow of one of M.K.'s former professors who by then had remarried. Actually, I knew her quite well because she was on the same boat as my parents and me when we travelled to London from Hong Kong. When the holiday was over, both of us continued to work hard at our studies. During January, I had the opportunity to witness the educational work being carried out in the Soviet Union. I joined an official educational delegation from China to the Soviet Union and had an extremely interesting time. Then during Easter M.K.'s missionary friends from Putien, Dr and Mrs Walker, invited us to spend a holiday together at their lovely home in Presteigne, in the Welsh county of Radnorshire.

Obviously we could not keep our intentions secret forever, and I finally found the courage to write to my parents about M.K.'s proposal. I had promised Father in Macau in 1928 that I would consult him before I ever became engaged. My letter, in English, was addressed to my three parents, who all lived separately, but it was sent to Father's home. It may have been stupid of me, but I told them the whole truth about M.K. having been engaged—albeit by his family—to some other girl whom he never intended to marry. So that they could understand his position better, I included his remark that the unsolicited engagement was "like a tumour that had to be removed by surgical methods." I asked for their approval to accept his proposal officially. The reply came fairly soon. I later learned that because Mamma was ill at the time, Father had not consulted her, but he did talk it over with Lady Margaret. At the time, therefore, I did not know that Mamma had nothing to do with the reply. Father's response was that they could not approve of my breaking up someone else's "marriage." He said that he was disappointed a daughter of his should want to do such a thing. As far as he was concerned, if I really loved M.K. I should make the sacrifice of turning him down. Obviously this was not what I wanted to hear. My immediate reaction was that he had not considered my happiness, viewing the matter solely from the perspective of the disgrace it might bring upon him and his family's reputation.

While all this was going on, M.K. had written back to his bishop,

an Englishman, asking what his assignment would be upon his return to China. When the bishop answered, he mentioned that he had heard that during M.K.'s stay in England he had fallen in love with the daughter of Sir Robert Ho Tung of Hong Kong. He added that he was concerned because he knew my mother was not Father's first wife and wanted to know what her status really was. I suppose for him, being a man of the church, this seemed to be an important question. However, when M.K. told me about it I was furious. I remember saying angrily, "What does my mother's status have to do with him?" It was indeed this letter from the Bishop of Putien and similar remarks made by others from time to time that led me much later to write the true story about my mother's marriage as a P'ing Chai (equal wife), which was fully in accordance with Chinese tradition and custom.

Besides coping with this personal problem, I suddenly had a letter from Father telling me he would soon be arriving in London and asking me to help him in various ways. The strain of hard work and emotional upset all became too much for me, and I finally succumbed to nervous anxiety. I was taken to a very good nursing home outside London where M.K. came to visit me as soon as he had finished his year at Edinburgh. It was many months before I recovered from this illness and was able to return to London to resume my studies. By then I had had time to think over the matter of M.K. very carefully. I had come to the conclusion that it would be better for both of us if we discontinued the relationship. Sadly, I wrote and told him I was going to give him up. Among other things, I explained that I felt it would be difficult for me to fit into his lifestyle in a small village in China where I did not know the local dialect and would feel entirely out of place. Realising there was no alternative, M.K. replied that he too foresaw that our relationship faced many difficulties that could not easily be overcome. In a gesture of finality, he cut up the studio photo that we had taken together and sent me back my half. It was a painful experience for both of us. We turned our backs on each other and threw ourselves into our work. Human nature being what it is, somehow we managed to overcome our difficulties and heartaches, but the scars took time to heal.

As the years passed, I would hear about M.K. from time to time. Much of the news came through one of his younger brothers, Dr M.Y. Yue, who brought his wife and family to Hong Kong when the Communist troops were nearing their home in Fukien. In due course I got to know them well, and they and their six children came to treat me

as a sister and aunt. Through them I heard that M.K. had eventually asked his aunt to enquire whether a very eligible young lady in their community—the daughter of their Chinese Christian minister—would be willing to marry him. It turned out that she was, and they became happily married and had four daughters, each of whom I later got to know quite well. I am glad that they had a happy and successful life together, and that M.K. was able to contribute so much to his community and to China. His wife enabled him to achieve much more than he could have done if he had married me. She and I became staunch friends, and all four daughters have come to regard me as a real auntie.

Before the younger brother M.Y. left China he asked M.K. to join him, but the offer was declined. M.K. told him that he had studied medicine in order to help the people of China, and he wanted to continue to do so irrespective of what government might be in charge. Through M.Y. and his wife, I was able to get news of M.K. from time to time and sometimes to give a little assistance by sending him medical journals and other professional needs. On one occasion he wrote to M.Y. asking for half a yard of Orlon, a material that he felt would be suitable for blood vessel surgery. At the time Orlon was a new product, and few people in Hong Kong had ever heard of it. We first enquired at several dispensaries, none of which even knew the name. Then, because he had asked for half a yard, I tried one of the large textile firms. They did have some of the material, so I took a chance and bought it, not knowing if it was exactly what he was looking for. M.Y. and I were both delighted when we heard back from China that it had arrived and proved to be successful for the purpose M.K. had envisioned. I felt pleased that in this sort of way I was still able to keep in touch with M.K. and meet some of his needs. On another occasion he asked for a subscription to a British surgery journal. I sent him a subscription for that periodical and an American one as well. In fact, those publications continued to reach him in China until the so-called Cultural Revolution during the 1960s, when M.K. asked me to discontinue sending them.

When I made my first visit to the "New China" in 1972, I included Hangzhou in my itinerary, naming M.K. as a friend I knew there. I spent a few days in that city and was glad to be able to visit him and his wife and spend Christmas Eve with them before flying back to Beijing the following day. In 1978 I invited both of them to spend a few days in a Shanghai hotel and to visit a famous hospital and other places there together. We then all went to Tsingtao before they returned to

Hangzhou and I went on to Beijing. In a similar way I saw a good deal of them during my subsequent trips and was able to continue my friendship with M.K. and his family, both in China and after I returned to the United States. M.K. worked right up until a few days before his 80th birthday. When he had a stroke, he was well cared for by his devoted colleagues in "his" hospital in Hangzhou. It was the place where he had done so much good work in the service of his countrymen. His ashes were scattered among the flowers and other plants around the hospital building. I have remained a good friend to the various members of his family.

Going back to the late summer of 1932, I returned to London from Switzerland as arrangements had been made for Grace to escort Father and Lady Margaret back to Hong Kong. Father continued to rest in Switzerland until it was time to proceed to Rome, where he would be joined by Grace before boarding the passenger liner in Italy. As arranged, I went to stay with Eva, taking Grace's place in their flat, although ever since the arrangement was first discussed between Eva, Grace, and myself, I was a little hesitant to do so. I realised that although I still genuinely worshipped Eva as a hero, we seemed to have grown somewhat apart and occasionally got on each other's nerves. On the other hand, it seemed the most logical thing to do, as she had the accommodation available and employed a German maid to help with the cooking and housework. Grace and even M.K. agreed with my moving in with her, so finally I did.

I then registered with the Institute of Education. This was the successor of the former London Day Training College, which I had known in my diploma of education days from 1927 to 1929, with Sir Percy Nunn as the Director. I first intended to undertake research into the prevention of juvenile delinquency under Sir Cyril Burt, whose books on the subject I had so much admired. Sir Percy and Sir Cyril both approved the idea, and I felt I had to find some casework or at least some environment in which to design some studies. I remembered that when Mamma was with me in London for the winter of 1927-28, the Chinese diplomatic and business circles had invited us to attend the large annual tea party to celebrate the lunar Chinese New Year, to which they had also invited all the ethnic Chinese children residing in Chinatown and Soho. There were a couple of hundred of them, full of energy, and practically all of mixed race. I was told that only one of the men in East

London had a Chinese wife. Most of the other fathers had been seamen, and they had to sign on to their ships in London. Many of them thus took English wives, whether or not they went through any form of marriage ceremony. However, they at least lived with their children and the children's mothers and supported them to the best of their ability.

Seeing that boisterous group of young people with all their energy, I thought they would have much potential either for good or for wrong-doing. So I hoped to contact them somehow and perhaps work with them in a positive way. I did not realise at the time just how involved I was to become in that Chinese community. My access to the people of Chinatown came about partially as the result of youthful horseplay. Initially I had written to the London County Council, telling them I was working for my Ph.D degree under Sir Cyril Burt and was hoping to gain access to the Chinese community in East London to try to do some work for them. Within a couple of weeks, I received a reply from the school attendance officer for the district concerned. He told me that if I were interested, I could go to his office in East London the following Saturday morning. I duly arrived at the appointed time, and he told me that normally the Chinese children were well-behaved and did well in school. Because it was during the Great Depression, conditions were sometimes difficult for them. Despite these challenges, Chinese fathers did their best for the children, often spending their last penny on them. This was all very well, but I needed to study their problems as well as their achievements.

As it turned out, the previous Sunday, when three boys were taking a walk in the residential district of east London, they passed a house with a bottle of milk standing on the doorstep, left there by the delivery man. The bottle was worth "tuppence-ha'penny." One of the three boys had English parents, while the others both had Chinese fathers and were normally regarded as Sino-British. Apparently the English boy told the younger of his friends, a nine-year old named Raymond, to fetch him the bottle of milk. He then drank half of it and offered the residue to the older Chinese boy, Johnny. Because his chest was weak Johnny went to an "open-air school" where the pupils were supplied milk for free each day, so he declined the offer. The half empty bottle was then handed back to little Raymond. Before he could drink any of it, the boys were caught red-handed by a policeman for stealing. Consequently, the attendance officer had to make some house visits that day, and he asked if I wanted to go with him. I jumped at the

opportunity and accompanied him on his rounds.

We found that both the Chinese boys came from the same building: Johnny and his mother lived on the ground floor, and young Raymond lived in the basement with his elder brother Ormond and their father, Mr Chung, who was unemployed at the time. Johnny's father had been a seaman. When he failed to return home after a few years, another Chinese, Uncle Chong, had taken care of the boy, his two sisters, and the mother. At times the uncle lived with them. The local council authorities thought this was immoral and so had taken the two girls away from the mother and placed them in a "care home" way up in the English Midlands. Johnny's mother worked as a charwoman when she could find employment, and was scared stiff for fear that the authorities might take her son away from her as well. I remember that her hands were clammy with fear and poor health. At the time she needed a gynecological operation but naturally could not afford it. Raymond's father had also been married to an English woman, and they had two sons and two daughters. However, they had separated and the mother had left, taking the two girls with her. Mr Chung was originally a cook in a local restaurant where he usually took his meals with some of his friends. He was generally allowed to take food home for the boys. He too was afraid that the boys, especially little Raymond, might be taken away from him by the local child welfare authorities.

After our visits to the two families, the police officer told me that the case would come up at Juvenile Court on the following Monday and that I was welcome to attend. I duly turned up on Monday for the hearing. When the officer had finished his report, the judge asked him if he had any suggestions. He advised that, "There is a Chinese lady here who seems to be interested in these two children. Perhaps Your Lordship might like to hand them over to her." The judge then asked to see the Chinese lady in question, so I stepped up. I explained that I was a student working for my Ph.D at the Institute of Education under Sir Cyril Burt, specialising particularly on the prevention of juvenile delinquency. I told him that I would like to try to help these boys as best I could.

When the judge asked me what I proposed to do about the case, I told him that I would try to find out as much as I could about the boys, their families, and their background. If necessary, I would take them to a child guidance clinic for help. He decided to hand them over to me and concluded by saying, "Please keep in touch as long as you can;

meanwhile, we are all grateful to you." Consequently the two Eurasian boys were freed, whereas the English boy had to return a week later for further trial. Understandably, the Chinese parents and Johnny's English mother were grateful and thanked me. What was equally important was that I now had official permission to visit the Chinese community as much as I could. This would enable me to learn and understand more about not only two particular families, but also the entire community. As it turned out, I later changed my thesis topic and no longer had that reason to go there or to keep in touch, yet I have done so until this very day.

Soon after the Nationalist Government of China had been established in Nanjing, it invited the League of Nations to send a delegation to China to study its education system and then submit a report. In the report, the League's delegation stated that China was biased towards the US education system, which was relatively modern in concept. As China was an old country with a long cultural heritage, the report recommended that the government might consider the education systems in European countries. These had much to offer the Middle Kingdom and might be more applicable. Consequently, the League strongly recommended that China send a fact-finding delegation to Europe. When the Chinese delegation of about half a dozen educators eventually arrived in London, they were well taken care of by the Board of Education (later the Ministry of Education) and the Institute of Education. Being a Ph.D student in that institution and also Chinese, I was asked by both organisations to help look after the distinguished visitors.

I already knew one member of the delegation quite well. He was Dr S.M. Lee, who had entertained Miss Siu Wai-sheung and me when we first arrived in Shanghai on holiday in the summer of 1926. Naturally when we met again we discussed the tragic murder of Wai-sheung in 1928 and the subsequent trial and execution of her husband, Miao. The murder was still the focus of some attention, and one day Dr Lee discovered a book in a London bookstore entitled *Seven Murders* that described seven lurid court cases, all of which had been decided mainly on the basis of circumstantial evidence. The book had a large photo of Siu Wai-sheung and her murderous husband, Miao, opposite the title page. Dr Lee's special responsibility was in the realm of technical education. Other members of the delegation were in charge



of primary, secondary, and university education, plus what was called "social" or "mass" education. Because of my obvious interest in all aspects of education, the delegation's chairman, Dr C.P. Cheng, asked if I would like to join them for their visits to Italy and the Soviet Union. I told them I was not particularly interested in seeing the fascist education system under Mussolini. However, as the Soviet Union's education programme had been quite highly praised by educators in the United Kingdom, I said I would be glad to accompany them on that visit.

They gave me the dates when they expected to arrive first in Warsaw and then in Moscow. I immediately asked a travel agent at Thomas Cook and Sons to get me the necessary visas and then buy my tickets for January 1933. After several weeks' delay in obtaining the visas, I told the agents just to book me as far as Warsaw and give me back my passport. Taking a chance, I then went straight to Warsaw to the office of Dr Falsky, chairman of the League of Nations delegation to China and a personal acquaintance. After I told him about my difficulty in obtaining permission to visit Moscow, he immediately telephoned the Ministry of Education in Moscow and pointed out that the Soviet Union had invited a delegation of educators from China. Here was a woman educator from China who had been invited by the delegation to join them but now, at this late stage, the Soviet Union would not even give her a visa. This would cause terrible diplomatic embarrassment. The Soviet Ministry got the message and immediately approved my visa. I took the next train for Moscow and joined the delegation on a Sunday evening. The visit proper began the next day, so I had not really missed anything.

We were assigned at least two interpreters and then taken to see a wide variety of educational and other related institutions, all of which proved interesting and informative. For the weekend, we were flown up to a mansion on a snowy mountain top to ski or to watch others skiing, although I did not attempt the sport at this time. Our guides told us that the mansion was originally a private home owned by a widowed old lady, but had subsequently been converted into a "holiday home for tired intellectuals." I have never forgotten that expression. Towards the end of our visit, the woman interpreter who had stayed near me most of the time asked if I had found the trip interesting. "Very much so," I said. To which she replied, "When you go back to China, you must do the same things as we do." I politely told her that we might do so, but perhaps not using Russian methods. The interpreter came back with the

rejoinder, "Well, if you don't use our communist methods, you won't get the money to do the things that you have to do." Unfortunately, that statement was true, because various governments in China had tried to introduce many needed reforms, but simply could not get the funds to see them through.

When our two weeks were over, most members of the delegation continued their visits to other parts of Europe, while I took a short side trip to Leningrad before returning to London to resume my studies. When the delegation returned to China, they told the minister of education about me, and in due course he wrote to ask if I might be interested in joining his staff. I wrote back to thank him for his kind offer, but told him that much as I would like to serve China under him, I felt that I should first finish my Ph.D, after which I hoped the offer would still be open. In 1936, when I had completed my thesis and earned my degree (but did not wait for the ceremony), I went to Nanjing before going home in order to pay my respects to the minister, Dr S.C. Wang, and to ask whether the job offer was still open. Dr Wang confirmed that it was. As I had not been home with my family for several years, we agreed that I should first spend the winter with them and then start work on March 1, 1937. But that was still in the future.

When I returned to London from Russia, I immediately resumed my studies. My proposed thesis was then still geared to the prevention of juvenile delinquency. My readings were mainly connected with that subject, and my projects in Chinatown represented part of the field work. I tried to find out as much as I could, not only about Johnny and Raymond, but about the entire neighbourhood of Limehouse. It was a busy time, and I remember one old man in Chinatown who asked if my feet ever got tired. I told him that I never noticed because I was so interested in the work I was doing.

One day when I visited the Chang family, whom I had come to know fairly well, Mrs Chang suggested that I lie down on her bed for a short rest. Of course I had no intention of sleeping there, but felt it would be good to relax my back a little. Her bed turned out to be very lumpy and uncomfortable. In small ways like this, I began to understand the conditions under which these people were living. During one of my visits to the family, Mr Chang told his eldest daughter in broken English: "Dolly, you no want go China. China nobody speak English. This lady come China. This lady speak English [sic]." The daughter,

then aged 18, had already won a scholarship for teacher training and told me, "I used to think China was a terrible place. My father has been in this country for almost 25 years now, and he still doesn't even speak English." This conversation opened my eyes to the generation gap that had grown between the parents of the London Chinese community and their offspring. The fathers were actually keen for their children to know and understand China, yet the young people had only the faintest chance of ever doing so.

Moreover, it was a great handicap for the young people to be Chinese in England at that time. It must be remembered that this was during the years of the Great Depression in England. The young people would tell me that if they found a job advertised, they probably would not even be called for an interview if they used their Chinese names on their applications. Sometimes they would try using their mother's maiden name, but if they were lucky enough to be called for an interview, their half-Chinese features would invariably give them away. The interviewers might ask them directly if they were Chinese, and generally they would admit it. In many cases they might not get the job because of the fierce competition, but they could not help feeling that their Chinese blood put them at a disadvantage. This gave them a severe inferiority complex, and some of them were quite bitter and hated themselves for being part Chinese.

When I heard these stories, I realised that these children and young adults had real psychological and employment needs, but I did not immediately know what could be done about it. However, my ideas began to take form from my association with Dr and Mrs Henriques. He was a giant of a man, both physically and in personality, and he and his wife were leaders of the Jewish settlement near Limehouse that literally looked after the entire Jewish community from the cradle to the grave. I was most impressed by them and their work. Dr Henriques was also a judge at a juvenile court and president of the National Association of Boys' Clubs and Mixed Clubs. All in all, he was well respected by all branches of the community.

Soon after Lunar New Year came around, the Chinese diplomatic, business, and student communities again organised a tea party for the children of the Chinese community in the East End. I suggested that we find a professional photographer to take a group photo. After the tea and photograph the younger ones went home. We had obtained the use of a long upper room above a large Chinese restaurant called the Tai

Tung Lou, which was sometimes used for private parties, and I asked the teenagers to go there for a meeting. I knew that many of them knew hardly anything about China even though they were Chinese. They had a common desire to identify more closely with that part of their own culture. It was a topic worthy of discussion, and there were various ideas put forth as to how this could be done. In the course of conversation, one young man, Cecil Youkee, finally hit the nail on the head. "I know what we want; we want a club. You can start a club for us," he told me with youthful enthusiasm. I thought it was an excellent idea, having seen the Jewish clubs and been told about the work they did. But it would take more than good intentions to get the club off the ground. I explained some of the difficulties to be overcome: To begin with, we had no place to meet and no funds.

One of the boys was a nephew of the manager of the restaurant in which we were meeting. He ran downstairs and came up again, announcing that his uncle was willing to let us use the room for the club three nights a week: Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Another youngster spoke up, saying that everyone should be prepared to pay small weekly dues to sustain the club, if I could help procure some books about China for a small lending library and obtain a ping-pong table with paddles and balls. There were offers from the teenagers to come along on each of the three nights to help run the club, on the understanding that I and a couple of other Chinese students would be there to organise. It all sounded fairly simple and I began to think it would work, so I told them I would consider it.

Actually, I was not the only Chinese student at the tea party and the meeting that followed it. Therefore I cannot claim all the credit for getting the club started. Also in the group were Mr Joseph Ku, who was then attending the London School of Economics and who subsequently rose to become an ambassador for China from Taiwan, and Dr Y.K. Tao, who had taken his Ph.D at Berlin University. Dr Tao wrote his thesis on the anthropological aspects of children of mixed parentage. For his research he had taken samples of children of mixed Chinese and German race, the measurements of some of their features, samples of their hair, and had done the same with some children of mixed heritage in Paris. He hoped later to obtain sample information from the children in East London's Chinatown.

Before proceeding to establish the club, I decided to consult two patriarchs of the Chinese community. One was Dr C.C. Wang,

chairman of the Chinese Purchasing Commission in London, which was responsible for the purchase of railway stock and other expensive materials for China. Father had the highest regard for Dr Wang's integrity and opinion. The other Chinese elder was Dr W.C. Chen, chancellor at the Chinese Embassy. He had an English wife, so he could understand the children's problems better than most people. He was also permanently stationed in London, and Father had known him for some time. These two elderly gentlemen invited me to lunch to discuss the club in greater detail, and finally they both encouraged me to go ahead with the project. I also consulted some friends at both the China Society, which was formed by a group of scholarly people, and the China Association, which was mostly businessmen with dealings in China or Hong Kong. The response all round was positive and encouraging. Consequently, arrangements went ahead. The Chung Wah Club was formally opened on April 20, 1933, a date that had been picked by the Chinese ambassador, Dr Quo Tai Chi, who officiated at the ceremony. Dr Henriques, president of the National Association for Boys Clubs' and Mixed Clubs came along and gave the assembly an inspiring address. The young members now had something to aim for.

From the very first day, the club was given a great deal of help and support from various members of the community. I arranged for my good friend, Dr Philip Lamb, to give free physical examinations to any club member in need of a health check. Mr Joseph Ku, Dr Tao, and I were almost always there, and others came along as well to help out. Sometimes we heard of important or wealthy people passing through London, and I would tell them about our work and invite them down to Chinatown to visit the club and have a Chinese meal. I would then ask them along to meet the young people and speak to them. Sometimes, of course, they would be moved to make a donation to help the club with its general running expenses. The famous artist, Liu Hai-Shu, once visited us and executed a superb Chinese brush painting of an eagle and a pine tree and presented it to the club. The word "eagle" is pronounced in the same way as the Chinese name for "Britain," so the gift was especially appropriate for the young members. Naturally, we always welcomed distinguished guests, but not all of them could fit us into their itinerary. I recall on one occasion the Tiger Balm tycoon, Mr Aw Boon Haw, was in London for a few days and promised to visit Chinatown on Saturday evening to see the club. However, on the very day of his visit, he sent word that he was not feeling well and could not come. When I

heard this I wondered if he might be suffering from a "political sickness," but the next morning he sent us fifty pounds sterling as a donation, and I was sorry I had judged him harshly.

I started my voluntary work in the spring of 1933, and during that time I occasionally wrote to M.K., telling him something about the project. He gave me a great deal of moral support, but I was beginning to find it difficult to sustain momentum. My own funds were running low, and all this extra voluntary work was taking up a good deal of my time. I travelled around constantly by bus or Underground. Eventually it got to the stage where, with special appointments in east and west London at different times, I found I was sometimes making the trip to Chinatown three times in one day. Of course, I continued to attend all the required lectures and seminars, but they were few. In England, pursuit of a Ph.D consists mostly of research and writing one's thesis. At that time I was still planning on working under Professor Cyril Burt on the prevention of juvenile delinquency, so I regarded all my work for the Chinatown project partly as field work for my studies and could justify it, at least to myself.

Added to all this, the dental work I was undergoing must have been undermining my general health. My dentist told me that I was having trouble with my gums, which I believe was some mild form of pyorrhoea. At any rate the treatment he gave me consisted of removing the mucous membrane around the teeth, half of the mouth at a time, and then covering the gums with wax so that a new membrane could grow under it. After one side had healed, he proceeded to the other side. This procedure lasted for several months, and during that time there were not many foods that I could comfortably eat. Furthermore, I was often short of time and hated to waste it queuing when I went to the less expensive eating places. The more expensive restaurants seemed out of the question for me. Therefore, I always prepared a hearty breakfast for myself at home to start the day. But the other meals varied according to my time and opportunity to partake of them. I usually went down to the club in Chinatown on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday evenings, at which time I would eat at a nearby Cantonese restaurant where I could obtain something simple and easy to chew and digest.

During 1933 I received a surprise letter from Father telling me that he was coming to London and would be landing at Southampton. He asked me to book him a suite of rooms at Claridge's Hotel and to find him a secretary. Later, when he wired details of his arrival, I realised

that it coincided with a bank holiday weekend. Eva had long before arranged to go out of town for the holiday and told me that we did not need to go all the way to Southampton to meet him. I did not want to argue with her because she was under pressure studying for her exams, and at first I intended to stay at home as she had advised me. However, I was uncomfortable with that decision and felt that as Father had taken the trouble to send us a wire, he would probably be extremely disappointed if there was no one there to meet him. Consequently, I wrote Eva a short note and left it in her room, stating that I was going to Southampton to meet Father's ship and would tell him that I was representing all of us who were then staying in London. This included Florence and K.C., who were in England on their honeymoon, as well as Robbie, who was also living in London at the time.

When I arrived at Southampton and met the boat, Father was very happy to see me. He had brought along our cousin Hong to serve as his travelling secretary and also Mrs Li, who had grown up at Idlewild as his practical nurse. The train journey back to the city was pleasant, and I remember showing Father a copy of an article I had written on my work in London's Chinatown. It had been printed in the *China Review*, published by the Central Union of Chinese Students in Great Britain and Ireland, and he told me he was pleased that I was doing this kind of work. Eva, Florence, and K.C. Yeo were at the station to meet us in London, and it was a happy family reunion. However, my feeling of well-being was not to last because that night, at home in our flat, I found that Eva had torn my note into tiny pieces and put them on the centre of my bedspread. It was obvious that she was furious with me for not taking her advice not to meet Father, but I realised it would be futile to try and appease her at that time.

The relationship between Eva and me had been deteriorating for some time. We were both somewhat nervous people, and we each had our own problems. I had already come to realise that it was almost impossible for people like us to live together harmoniously, despite how close we had been before. The previous winter she had undergone an emergency operation to remove her appendix just when we had planned to move to a new house. I tried to cope with both events and my own studies, which was not easy. Eva and I began to differ over little things. She told me not to send a wire to our parents about her health, because she wanted to save them from worrying unnecessarily. Probably she was right, but I felt they should know what was happening to us so I wrote

anyway. In those days there was no airmail service and the letter went via Siberia, which took time. As soon as she was out of danger I wired home to let my parents know. I think we were both equally as concerned about our parents' health, even though it was a subject that caused us to differ. I was particularly concerned about Father's condition at the time. The year I had acted as his secretary in London, he had consulted various doctors about his frequent nocturnal urination. As suspected, they had diagnosed prostate trouble. Therefore when I heard he was coming back again I had asked Eva's opinion about his condition. She said: "Of course he needs an operation, but which doctor would dare touch him?" I valued her medical knowledge and was saddened to hear this prognosis.

About a fortnight after Father arrived and had settled into his suite at Claridge's, he decided to give a large luncheon for his friends in one of the hotel's private dining rooms. He invited all the members of a Chinese delegation that was due to attend an economic conference in London, together with the Chinese ambassador, Dr T.C. Quo, and the charge d'affaires, Dr W.C. Chen. I was the only woman present at the lunch, as Father wanted me to act as hostess. As part of my duties, I regaled the party with an account of the work that had already been accomplished in London's Chinatown for the young people of the Limehouse community. I also stressed that both Dr Quo and Dr Chen had given me their full support in this work, as Dr Quo had officially declared the Chung Wah Club open. Some of the guests asked if they could go along to Chinatown to visit it. I was delighted and told them that would be fine, as we frequently had special visitors on the evenings the club was open. All in all, the guests at the lunch seemed quite pleased and interested.

Actually Father had hoped originally to join the Chinese delegation in London in an official or unofficial capacity. While aboard ship he had broached the subject with Dr T.V. Soong, brother-in-law of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and head of the China delegation. Dr Soong, a noted economist, said that as Father had treated him "like a brother," he would refer the idea to the Chinese government, then based in Nanjing, for a decision. It was after their arrival in London that Dr Soong broke the news that the government had not approved the idea. Naturally, Father was disappointed because he had honestly hoped to make some small contribution to the discussions, or at least he would have enjoyed being one of the participants.



It had been a long and tiring meal, and when the Chinese delegation and other guests left, I felt exhausted. Father escorted me into my room, where he sat down to continue chatting with me. I tried to console him as best I could about his having been turned down as a delegate, because he was still unhappy over his unsuccessful bid to join the conference. He felt that they had not accepted him because he was Eurasian. I realised that this was still a sore point with him and tried to cheer him up. I told him that I had been attending various interesting courses on psychopathology and mental hygiene, where the psychiatrist claimed that he could cure people who had had nervous breakdowns. I agreed that such people could be cured, but it was not as easy as it might seem. Father exclaimed, "It would be a good thing if Daisy [my second sister] could be cured." I told him that I had written up her case study and handed it to my lecturer, Dr Hadfield, a good psychiatrist. Afterwards Dr Hadfield said it seemed that the case had gone on for too long and that there was "no chance" of treating, far less curing, Daisy. However, I was impressed that Father had thought enough about the matter to bring it up in our conversation. I always knew that Mamma worried constantly about Daisy, but I had not realised that Father, too, shared her deep concern.

Although exhausted, I was still too polite to tell Father I wanted to rest. I was wearing a pretty, mauve-coloured Chinese cheongsam. It was a long gown with a high collar that was very tight, especially as my neck seemed to swell from time to time. Our conversation changed from one topic to another, then for no apparent reason I suddenly broke down sobbing. Father was very concerned, and seeing the difficulty I was having to loosen my collar, he undid the Chinese buttons for me and told me to lie down and relax, which I did. He went into the bathroom and brought back a cold compress and applied it to my forehead. Within a couple of minutes I was feeling all right again, and at that we decided to call it a day. We were both dead tired and could continue our talk after we had got some rest. Father went back to his room, and I fell asleep totally exhausted. I did not realise it at the time, but that was the beginning of a long illness brought about by continuous physical, mental, and emotional strain due to my heavy work load and personal affairs.

The first afternoon of my illness, Eva came to see me in the little room within Father's suite and asked what I needed from the flat. I asked her

to pick up a few personal things such as clothing and also to bring a bottle of potassium bromide tablets that Mamma had given me for sleeplessness. Because Eva was giving me her best bedside manner, I ventured to ask her for instructions about the quantity and frequency of pills I should take. I told her that the previous night I had dissolved one in water but had forgotten to take it. She said I could take one every night, but she thought it would be unsafe to leave them with me and so left the bottle with Father's nurse, Mrs Li. Eva no doubt meant well in doing this, but as Mrs Li was already quite busy looking after Father, she forgot to give me the tablets. Generally, I could sleep well enough during the first part of the night, but after that I would become wide awake and wander to the sitting room, where my cousin Hong was staying having given up his room for my use. I would have taken my pills, but Mrs Li had them with her in Father's room and no one dared to disturb them, so I had little sleep at all the rest of the night. This situation carried on for several days. However, I still assisted with Father's secretarial duties and answered the telephone.

Florence told me it was K.C. who first noticed that I was getting into an emotional state, at which point he suggested to Father that I should see a proper doctor. Father was emphatic. "No doctors," he said, "I will cure her myself." One night I remember a young friend of ours, Dr Tom White, came to visit Eva and me, and he too made the same recommendation but was given a similar reply. Fortunately, Prof Gerrard from The University of Hong Kong, who had attended Mamma in her illness, happened to be on leave in London. Seeing from the papers that Sir Robert was in town, he went to Claridge's to call on him. Father told him that I was not feeling well, so he kindly came into my room to see me. I had known him in Hong Kong and immediately asked how Mamma was really getting on, because he had been looking after her medically. He told me truthfully that she was well on the way to recovery and asked me to tell him about my own condition. I explained that I felt exceedingly tired and exhausted, but that all I needed was "to go into the country for a long weekend or a week."

That was not good enough, according to Prof Gerrard. He wanted to take me to see a psychiatrist. I suggested Dr Hadfield, whose lectures I had attended and whom I felt I could trust. Prof Gerrard tried to contact him but failed to do so. In the end he contacted a Dr Hart, who said he would see me. I did not recognise the name at the time, but accepted the professor's decision. He told me to get dressed and said he

would personally escort me to the doctor. Instead of going down the elevator at Claridge's, the professor escorted me down the main staircase. Father's suite of rooms was just one floor above the lobby, and the professor wanted the hotel people to see that I was not really so ill. Father had the use of a Rolls Royce, and we went in it from the hotel to Dr Hart's office. While waiting I weighed myself on a scale in the waiting room. I had indeed lost a considerable amount of weight, part of which I put down to the dental treatment I had been undergoing. When Dr Hart questioned me, I could roughly guess what was wrong with me. I showed him some of the symptoms I was suffering from, such as trembling fingers, and admitted that I had been working under strain. I also told him that "my beloved Father and beloved sister had pushed me off the deep end." Later, I realised this was an unfair thing to say, because I did not bear any grudges and there were many other factors that contributed to my illness.

As a result of that consultation, Dr Hart decided to send me to a nursing home, which was set amid beautiful grounds to the north of London. I had not been there more than a day or two when Eva arrived to pay me a visit, having driven more than an hour from London. However, her good intentions were thwarted by the hospital administration, which would not allow such a meeting, fearing that I would be upset. On another day, Eva brought along a large basket of delicious pears, which reminded me of the Chinese story concerning fraternal love associated with that fruit. I was having a nap at the time. When I woke up and saw the fruit, I asked to see Eva but was told that she had gone. I wondered why, not realising for one moment that she had again been denied access to her sister. Actually, I was being cut off from the outside world.

I still received letters, and one day a friend wrote that she had read in the newspaper that Father was hospitalised. Not having heard from anyone for days, I immediately jumped to the conclusion that Father must be critically ill or perhaps dying. I told the doctor at the nursing home that according to Chinese custom, children must be at the bedside when a parent passed away. I insisted that I be allowed to go to my sick or dying father, but promised to return and continue to rest afterwards. The doctor tried hard but could not dissuade me. Finally I suggested that he contact Eva to come and speak to me. I remember reciting to him Eva's impressive string of degrees—MB, BS, DTM&H, DGO and LM—of which I was exceedingly proud, and telling him that

I would stay in the home on condition that he cooperated with her. The next time she came, she was allowed to see me. Florence and K.C also paid me a visit, but they soon had to sail for the United States, where I believe K.C. had registered for a postgraduate course. Actually that nursing home was so far away from town that I did not expect to receive many visitors.

Many years later, when I saw M.K. again in 1972, he told me that he had gone to London and tried to see me at the nursing home, but was not allowed to do so. I was not even told about his proposed visit. When he passed his FRCS exam, he wired me the news and I wired back my congratulations. I assumed then he would be coming to see me, and told the nurses so. But when he tried to visit me a second time, he was again refused. On that occasion, he went instead to stay with our friends in Wales for a while. Finally, just a few days before he had to set sail to leave the country, he was allowed to visit me briefly. At that time I had no idea how long it would be before I would recover or what my future plans and health would be. Therefore we did not discuss the topic of our future at all.

The psychological stress posed by my voluntary work with the young British Eurasians, combined with overwork and physical illness, had become too much to cope with. This was partly because I had not yet come to terms with my own Eurasian background. Therefore I decided to take some of the pressure off by changing to a more philosophical topic for my Ph.D thesis. This was entitled "Ancient and Modern Educational Theory in China." It was not until the autumn of 1936 that I had completed it, handed it in, and made my oral defence of it. Having done that I felt that I had brought a chapter of my life to a close. I was told that I had passed the exam, but I had no wish to stay for the award ceremony. Instead I headed home via Canada and Nanjing.



The Ho Tung children around 1910, before Florence was born. From left: Jean, Irene, Eva, Vic, Grace, Eddie, Daisy, and Robbie.



Opium divan in the Marble Sitting Room at Idlewild.



Portrait of Mamma, Lady Clara Ho Tung.



Autographed photo of Father, Sir Robert Ho Tung,  
with decorations.





The author, a few weeks after her graduation,  
in early 1926.



Ho Tung family celebration in 1930.



The author, dressed to be presented to Queen Mary, 1932.



Last photo of Mamma (in black at Father's left), taken on author's birthday in October 1937 at Idlewild.



Daughter Junie near the garden at Idlewild.



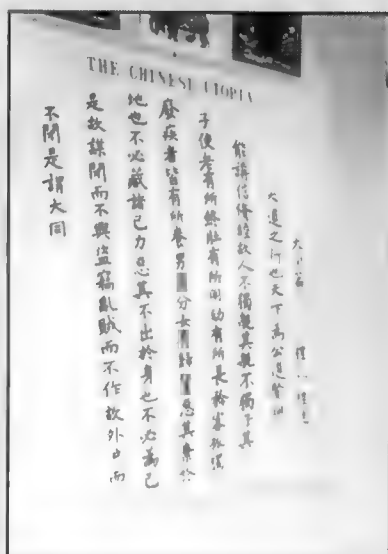
The author with husband H.H. Cheng before their marriage in 1940.



The author with Miss Elaine Lee (later Mrs Chan), her protégé and successor at the Tai Shing School.



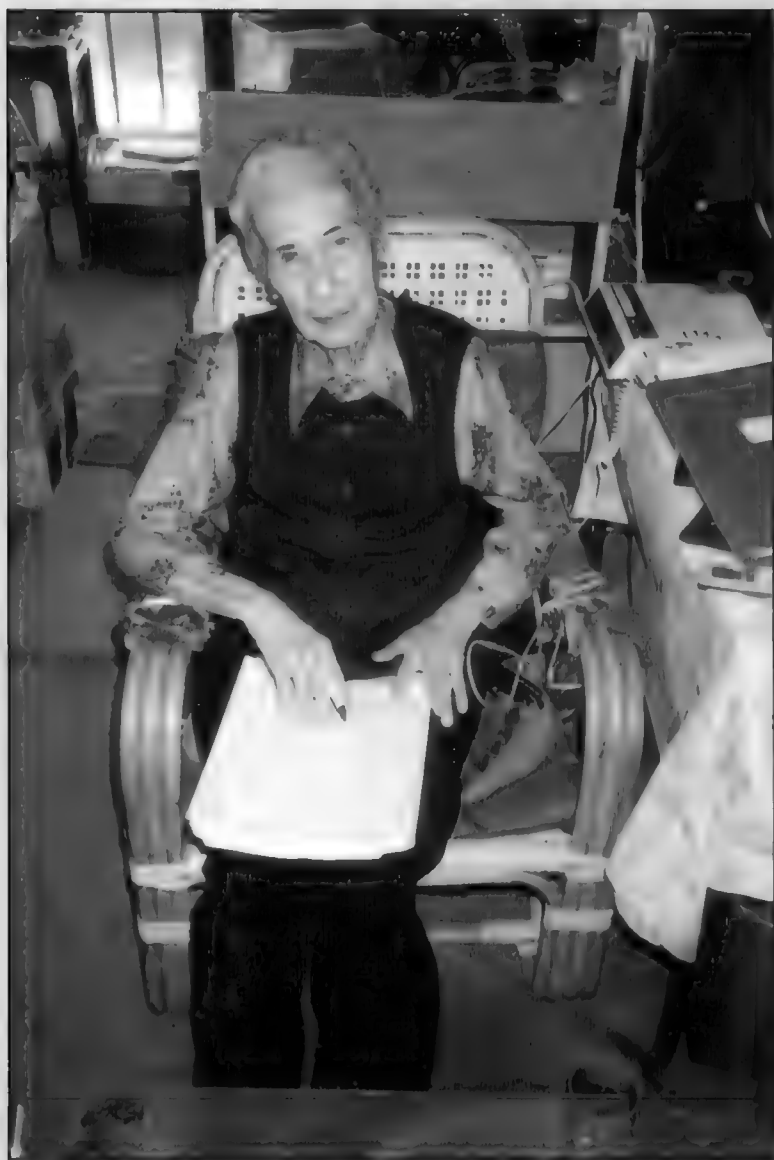
Faithful amah Hing Jieh.



Classic text chosen by author as creed at Tai Shing School.



Farewell party for author at the Tai Shing School, 1967.



The author at work in her favourite rattan chair, 1996.



## Marriage

**A**t the end of 1936 on my way home from London, I went to Beijing. Apart from a few professional visits, I spent quite a lot of time trying to find out whether the Beijing Union Medical College had a vacancy in gynaecology and obstetrics that might suit Eva, if she were interested. I had originally mentioned my hope of getting Eva a position in Beijing to my good friend Grace Liang when I was in Shanghai. Grace introduced me to her sister-in-law, Mrs P.P. Liang, who was a social worker at the Beijing Union Medical College. She lived in a street called Shih Chia Hutung in the old capital city. As this was the same street where the two Cheng families had lived previously, quite naturally I asked her if she knew anything of their whereabouts. She told me that Dr H.S. Cheng and the elder branch of the family had moved—as had the younger branch, who had gone northeast and obtained jobs. However, the old mother was still living down the road. I was delighted because I remembered how kind she had been to me when I stayed with her daughter at the Liang home. I asked Mrs Liang's servant to make a phone call to tell the old lady that Miss Ho from Hong Kong was in town and would like to visit her. I was glad to receive her reply telling me I would be welcome.

It appears that having got my message, the old lady toddled into her son's room to tell him that I had turned up. He was H.H. Cheng, the thoughtful young man who had played guide, chaperone, and friend to the Three Graces when we were on holiday in the region so many years before. H.H. was surprised by my arrival and equally as keen as his mother to see me again. When I arrived and was shown into the sitting room, both of them were waiting to greet me. As we sat and chatted,

H.H. told me that he recently had a good job as head of the Chinese Eastern Railway's printing factory. However, the Chinese government had sold the railway to the Japanese. Although H.H. did not want to work for them and intended to resign, he was not allowed to do so because he had been educated in Japan and spoke the language fluently. He had about 1,000 Russian and Chinese employees working under him, many of whom had resigned and asked him to write a simple letter of reference for them, which he did. However, there was nobody he could ask to do that for him.

Finally, H.H. decided to tell his employers that his mother was ill and that he had to go back to Beijing to see her. As his mother had previously visited him in Harbin, they believed him. He could not take any of his things because that would have made them suspicious, so he left everything behind and had just arrived home less than ten days before. I asked him what his plans were, and he said he was hoping to find other work. At that time practically everybody in Beijing was trying to learn Japanese, expecting the invaders to take over the former capital at any time. But this in no way affected his resolve not to work under the Japanese. I suggested he might go to Nanjing to look for employment. The Nationalist Government had moved there and seemed to be doing a good job of developing it into a new capital city for the country. This seemed more suitable for him than Shanghai, which had always been the industrial centre of China. He explained that he did not know anyone in Nanjing. Not having been in the region for the past decade, he had lost contact with most of his old friends. I have always tried to help my friends as much as I can and said to him: "Why don't you give me your resume; if there is a chance, I might be able to help you." Little did I then realise that our destinies were beginning to merge.

Old Mrs Cheng asked me to stay for dinner. At first I hesitated, but when she pressed me, I said I would do so only on condition that it was a simple family meal. She assured me that it would be so, and I stayed. We carried on chatting, and later she asked me about my personal affairs. I deliberately told her a lie, wanting to avoid going into detail. I said I was already engaged but was postponing any further plans as I wanted first to take the job at the Ministry of Education that had been offered to me. At that stage I had no real idea what H.H.'s personal situation was or how he felt about me.

When dinner was announced, I discovered that Mrs Cheng had ordered a full table of food from a neighbouring restaurant and had

invited the elder branch of the Cheng family to come over and meet me again. I had first met all of them in 1926, of course. There was H.H.'s Paternal Aunt (the uncle had died of a heart attack in Shanghai after hearing some bad news); the Eldest Brother, who was a medical doctor trained in Germany; his wife, whom we all called Eldest Sister-in-law; their daughter, whom we called Second Younger Sister; and a charming and friendly lady from Soochow (which is noted for its beautiful women) whose name now escapes me. This made seven of us at table. I told them that I had planned to take a trip to the Western Hills on Sunday and had already asked my friend, Miss Kuai, to write to the caretaker at her summer house there to prepare a table of simple dishes, as I hoped to persuade a few friends to go with me. I gave a general invitation to everyone at dinner, although I did not seriously expect the two old ladies to come. Being a Sunday outing, I hoped that perhaps the doctor, together with his wife and sister, and H.H. might join us. At the time, I was staying with a young friend of mine, Miss Y.C. Hoh, and knew that she too would be coming with us.

Meanwhile, during the next couple of days I had arranged to see some famous rural educational work being carried out at Chou-ping and Ting-hsien. I had heard about this as a student at Teachers' College and from other sources. On a visit to Yenching University to see my former senior colleague, Dr You Kuang Chu, he volunteered to act as my escort in order to point out some of the things I might otherwise miss. It was an excellent idea, and I gladly welcomed his offer. He told me that for the Chou-ping section of the trip, I should bring along a sheet and pillowcase. We would need these because when we stayed overnight at the small inn near the local railway station, we would be sleeping on top of a kang. This was a hard bunk, built like a raised section of flooring, that served as a communal bed. The kang was like an oven, being heated with straw and other combustible material from the outside that kept the occupants warm within. As it was around New Year, it was exceedingly cold outside, but quite comfortable on top of the kang. The cost was only 20 cents in Chinese currency. I do not think many people could boast of having had a night's accommodation at such a low price.

Finally Sunday came around, and Miss Hoh and I set out for the Western Hills. We took a taxi to pick up the Cheng family and were quite surprised to find that H.H. was the only one who could come along with us. All three of us enjoyed the outing, but I felt rather guilty for

having ordered a whole table of food to be prepared for us at the summer house. However, the servants and their families probably enjoyed the remainder of the meal afterwards. During the course of the day H.H. handed me his resume, and I promised to do what I could if there was an opportunity. This chance presented itself when I was on my way south. I had to visit Nanjing to see Dr Franklin Ho, the deputy political head of the Executive Yuan (similar to the Cabinet), who wanted me to convey a message to Father. When I arrived, he explained that the Nationalist Government was to hold an exhibition of industrial products in the spring. Since Father was then a senior honorary adviser to the government, it was hoped that he might visit the show and study the products with a view to investing in them.

After that conversation, I brought out H.H.'s resume and asked Dr Ho whether he knew of any opening that might suit H.H.'s qualifications. He studied the details before telling me that indeed there just happened to be an opening for a personnel manager at the Yung Li chemical factory. He said: "Why don't you write and ask H.H. to come as soon as possible for an interview?" H.H. had previously been the personnel manager for a shipbuilding yard in Tientsin, and this job seemed to fit his qualifications and personality perfectly. Therefore I contacted him as advised, but he could not leave Beijing for a while. If I remember correctly, at the time his father was away in Tientsin, and H.H. was substituting for him as manager of the family store. At any rate, he did not go south immediately. Meanwhile the manager of Yung Li went to north China for some weeks; when he returned, he had found a suitable candidate for the Tientsin job.

When I told Father that the Nationalist Government had asked him to pay a visit to the exhibition of Chinese products there, he wanted the invitation confirmed in writing, which it was. A couple of months after I had begun my duties at the Ministry of Education in Nanjing under Dr S.C. Wang, Father and several members of his staff arrived. He had travelled from Hong Kong to Shanghai by boat. Soon after his arrival, he wrote and asked Mamma to join him. Meanwhile he concentrated on the task at hand. From the moment Father arrived in Nanjing accompanied by some of his attendants, my boss gave me time off to assist him. I went to meet his train and for the next few days devoted myself to helping him with his itinerary, while working in my office part time to keep up with my own commitments. As part of my duties, I had been asked to prepare a set of booklets in English briefly

describing the educational system in China. The officers in charge of each section either gave me the information in Chinese, which I would translate into English, or attempted to write it in that language themselves. It took me quite a while to translate or to improve upon their English, but eventually the job was completed.

Paradoxically, the Chinese government had decided to give Father what could aptly be described as a royal welcome. He tried to persuade his hosts to keep to a minimum any banquets held in his honour, partly because of the cost and partly because his digestion would not allow him to do justice to the elaborate food. I remember, however, that my own boss, Dr S.C. Wang, and one or two other old friends of Father had a number of splendid dinners or lunches lined up for him. The minister of foreign affairs also gave a big tea reception in his honour. So many people were invited to this function that it may have helped reduce the number of parties Father had to attend.

Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek had recently recovered from the back injury he had sustained in the "Si-an Incident." This occurred when two of his own officers kidnapped him in an attempt to dissuade him from fighting the Communists; instead they wanted him to cooperate with the Communists to defend China against the Japanese. By the time of Father's visit, the Generalissimo was feeling much better, and he invited Father to visit him at his Nanjing residence. Eddie had joined us from Shanghai, so he and I accompanied Father when he called on Chiang Kai Shek, who I recall had "piercing eyes." Because of his recent injury, he was sitting in an armchair in a small sitting room outside his bedroom. Father sat in another armchair while Eddie and I occupied a couple of straight-back chairs near them. As far as I can remember, Madame Chiang—better known in China by her maiden name, Soong Mei Ling, as she was the youngest of the three famous Soong sisters—was not home at the time. Incidentally, in the 1980s, during one of my visits to Nanjing, I read in the newspapers that "Mei Ling Palace" was open to the public. Out of curiosity, I went back to that same room and immediately recognised it. Even the two big easy chairs were still there in the same position.

When Father first arrived in Shanghai, he had written to Mamma asking her to join him, but before she left Hong Kong, she sat up all night on the eve of Buddha's birthday—the eighth day of the fourth moon (May 17, 1937)—to copy out her Will, which she had evidently been working on for some time, with advice from close friends. That night she

worked on it carefully in Chinese, using a proper calligraphy brush, and the next morning took it to Lo and Lo's office to have M.K.'s brother, M.W., and one of his clerks, witness her signature. Of course we did not know any of this at the time, but I realised the significance of the date when the Will was shown to us after she passed away less than one year later, on January 5, 1938. She arrived in Nanjing a couple of weeks after Father, but by that time he had already left the Nationalist capital and returned to Hong Kong to keep some appointments he had made beforehand. However, I was there to meet her train and my boss, Dr S.C. Wang, and his wife kindly invited Mamma and me to lunch at their home. They were very hospitable to both of us, and Mrs Wang told me I could visit her at home whenever I wanted, which I did from time to time. I was interested to learn that in his younger days Dr Wang had also studied in England, where he obtained his doctorate.

Others who were most kind to me included the mayor, Ma Chiu Chun, and his wife, both warm-hearted Cantonese folk whom I got to know quite well during the few months I was in Nanjing. They too gave Mamma a warm welcome, as did so many others. I got to know Dr and Mrs Franklin Ho and Dr and Mrs Han Li Wu whom, because they were considerably younger people, I could treat as personal friends and contemporaries. Dr Ho had been a professor of economics at the famous Nankai University in Tientsin, but was then serving as the deputy head of political affairs for the Executive Yuan. Dr Han was director of the China office for the Sino-British Boxer Indemnity Fund. When I returned from England the previous year, I had approached him for a contribution to the Endowment Fund of Chung Wah School and Club we had set up in East London; he had generously arranged a donation from the Boxer Indemnity Fund. However, someone advised me that as the club in London was not urgently in need of funds, I should invest this money in Chinese government bonds in the name of the School and Club, which I did. Of course when the Chinese Nationalist government collapsed some years later, the bonds went down with it. Meanwhile, in London the school and club had other troubles, although I did not learn of them until I returned to Britain in 1953 for my UNESCO Fellowship.

While working at the Ministry, in addition to editing or writing booklets about education in China, I was also asked from time to time to escort foreign educational visitors to the leading schools and universities in Nanjing. At the time, Dr Wu Yi-fang was the first Chinese president of the Ginling Women's College. I had already met her several years

earlier, when I went to Ginling to visit one of the students there and to see how the college operated. The student had informed Dr Wu of my plans, and she kindly allowed me to stay at the college guest house. Consequently, when I worked at the Ministry, we could regard each other as old friends, and we also had many interests in common. I was to meet her again in 1972 and coaxed her into telling me a good deal of her personal history. She told me she had been President of the Students' Association of Ginling College in 1919 when the students' strike of May 4 broke out across China. She told me that she had been active in the fact that Ginling, too, participated in it. Later, in 1981, I was fortunately able to solicit her help on behalf of an armless handicapped child. When the time approached for the annual inspection of schools, I was assigned to accompany one of the Ministry's Inspectors to view Nanjing's secondary schools. Then, a week or two later, I went with another Inspector to view similar institutions in Greater Shanghai. It was interesting to see what was really going on in some of the better-known secondary education institutions at the time. Visiting schools has always been one of my hobbies.

It happened that one of my former Lingnan protégé, Au Yang Kang, the athlete whom I had advised to go into the Chinese Army, was also in Nanjing. He had graduated in artillery from the Military Academy in the city, and his school had asked him to stay on, which indicated that he had done quite well in training. There was another former Lingnan graduate, Szeto Kwong, also a well-known athlete, who happened to be in Nanjing at the same time, and the two persuaded me to go horse riding with them. The idea appealed to me, as I had enjoyed riding on donkeys in Shanhaikuan in 1914, but I am afraid that I was not athletic enough to be a good horseback rider. I found the horse far too wide for me to sit comfortably straddled across it, and sitting side-saddle seemed totally unsafe. After trying that sport twice, I had to admit defeat and give it up.

When I look back to those days, I feel that I was fortunate that my domestic arrangements were always satisfactory. When I first went to Nanjing in 1936 for an interview with the minister of education, my good friend, Dr S.M. Djang, persuaded her brother-in-law, C.N. Chang, the minister of railways, to allow me to stay in ministry quarters for the few days I needed. The following March, when I returned to Nanjing to start my job as Editor by Special Appointment at the Ministry of Education, I again stayed in the Railways Ministry for the first few days

while looking around for a place of my own. To my delight, I soon found a suitable apartment with a small but serviceable dining-cum-living room that was conveniently located in the same street as the ministry, the Cheng Hsien Chieh. Now I also had to find a servant to shop, cook, and clean for me. Mamma had a good friend, the second concubine of Mr S.Y. Liang, whose son, Ting Shuk, was working in the Ministry of Agriculture in Nanjing. I was also well acquainted with the family. One day I called on the middle-aged concubine and, during my visit, noticed that the family employed an efficient Cantonese amah. She appeared to have a good personality and went about her tasks well. I asked Mrs Liang if her amah had any friends from her district whom she could recommend to me. As luck would have it, within a couple of days they had found me an amah called Ah Saam, who proved to be admirably suited to my needs.

Time seemed to fly. I had joined the Education Ministry on March 1, 1937, and the international situation was getting worse. A few years earlier, on September 18, 1932, Japan had taken Manchuria. The Japanese had renamed their new puppet state Manchuko and persuaded the deposed former boy Emperor of China, Henry Pu Yi (now known popularly as the Last Emperor), to become its sovereign. By this time not only Henry Pu Yi but the whole of China was caught up in a train of events that was to bring China to its knees and herald the entry of Japan into World War II in opposition to the British and Americans.

By the time I visited Beijing at the end of 1936, the capital of China had been moved to Nanjing by the Nationalist government, and the former northern capital had been renamed Beiping. A large number of people were already learning Japanese in anticipation of the time when the enemy would be taking over North China, including the traditional capital. On July 7, 1937, there was a skirmish between Japanese occupation forces and Chinese citizens at the railway bridge near Beijing called Lu-Kou-Chiao. In the west this is known as the Marco Polo Bridge because the famous traveller had once crossed the river there. This minor incident turned out to be the beginning of another Sino-Japanese War, when the Japanese later attacked and occupied a good part of China proper. The flames of war soon spread. By August there was heavy fighting in Shanghai. The Japanese bombed the densely populated Chinese section of Chapei. Eddie telephoned me from Shanghai, asking how I was getting on and whether I would like to join



him there. I felt it was kind and brotherly of him to have thought of me, but I did not think his suggestion was a good one and told him I would think it over.

Nanjing was by no means well prepared for war. Some of the wealthy residents and officials had already evacuated their wives and children, but a large part of the population did not have the means to leave. The city offered little or no protection in the event of hostilities, and as far as we knew it did not even have any air raid shelters. All the same I was determined to stay. I argued that I had gone there to work, and it was now my moral duty to remain. Opinions differed, of course, and a close friend from my London student days made hasty arrangements to vacate her recently rented flat when her family decided to leave the city. Knowing of my situation, she simply gave me the flat, including a few pieces of rattan furniture that her family had bought for it. Her place was extremely close to the ministry where I worked and was much grander than the two little rooms I was currently living in. Therefore I thought it would be a change for the better. Of course, this did not alter the general feeling of gloom that descended upon everyone when the Japanese started bombing Nanjing, though I had not actually moved into the new flat. Precautions against the dangers were often quite rudimentary. If we happened to be out in the streets during a raid, all we could do was stand under a large tree and hope it would offer some protection. At the office, nobody could concentrate on doing any real work; most of our conversation seemed to revolve around the war. To say the least, conditions were becoming quite worrying; however, I carried on the best I could.

Meanwhile, Madame Chiang Kai-shek was actively organising the women—the wives of government officials and others—to form an organisation with a long Chinese name that translates as the Chinese Women's National Association for Relief of the Officers and Soldiers of the Defensive War. The establishment of this organisation was announced by telegram all over China and to some overseas Chinese communities. Chinese women everywhere were urged to form their own local branch associations. Money was raised and utilised to procure all kinds of medical supplies, warm clothing, and other commodities that could be used for the general comfort of the soldiers. As a matter of course, all of us women in Nanjing who had been invited to join the parent association did so and contributed whatever time and resources we could afford. Soon after that, Madame Chiang founded another organisation,

known as the Chinese National Association for the Care of War Orphans. By "war orphans" she meant not only real orphans, but also those children whose parents were so busily engaged in war work that they had no time to look after them. To her credit, she actually did take a personal interest in looking after the welfare of orphaned children, especially those whose parents had been in the armed services and lost their lives. There was a well-run orphanage in Nanjing doing this work, one of the show places especially for visitors from abroad.

Having missed out on the job at the chemical factory, H.H. was now actively looking for some other suitable post. He concentrated his attention around Shanghai and Nanjing and tried to renew acquaintances with old friends and follow up any leads they might suggest. In those days in China, jobs were hardly ever advertised in the papers or journals, as they often are in the west. As a result, it was necessary to rely on friends or acquaintances to hear of openings and to be put in touch with prospective employers. During the months H.H. was seeking employment, I was able to get to know him better and came to appreciate some of his many excellent qualities, as well as his genuine and unselfish love for me.

H.H. had a Fifth Paternal Uncle working in a quite high position in the Ministry of the Navy. Soon after the bombing of Nanjing had started, this uncle asked H.H. to give me a message. "Tell Irene she must not stay in her apartment in Cheng Hsien Chieh because the government arsenal is also in that street, and the Japanese are sure to bomb it some day. She must move away from there," he cautioned. Actually, he did not realise at the time that I already had the offer of another residence. Nevertheless, even when he found out I had been offered a new location, he still wanted me to move farther away from that district. He advised that there was a Yangtse Hotel near the river that flew a British flag; perhaps I should stay there, as the Japanese would probably not dare bomb a building that was flying the Union Jack.

I was quite confused and did not know what I should do. H.H. repeatedly tried to persuade me to leave, but I felt strongly that it was my moral duty to stay. He told me: "Today you may see your friends and colleagues around; tomorrow they might have taken flight and not even told you they were going." He spoke from his personal experience of what was normal for official circles in China at the time. Finally I

decided to speak to my boss, Dr Wang. I told him I knew that my parents must be quite worried about me and that I had received a telephone call from my brother, Eddie, asking whether I would like to join him in Shanghai. Dr Wang understood, but advised me that Shanghai was definitely not the place to go to either. He agreed that conditions in Nanjing were indeed worsening and suggested that maybe I could go to Lushan or even Hong Kong to watch developments from there.

When I told H.H. about my conversation with Dr Wang, he pressed me to leave immediately. So I never went back to the office to collect my favourite books, my typewriter, a framed copy of my Ph.D certificate, and other personal things to which I was attached. Since I had not told my colleagues about my conversation with Dr Wang, they must have regarded me as a deserter. I did not want to let anyone down, but after Dr Wang's advice I felt that I did not have to keep up a pretence. The truth was that I had cold feet and could not face the conditions any more. I do not remember much about packing. H.H. and I went to a hotel near the river. We even talked about watching events from there, with me possibly going to work should conditions permit. As it turned out we did not stay, because H.H. found a boat sailing for Hankow that very day and convinced me to board it with him. Before leaving I wired home: "Returning via Hankow, escorted."

When we reached Hankow we had to wait a couple of hours for the train to Guangzhou. To fill in the time we hired a horse and carriage and at a leisurely pace rode around to see what the city looked like. I was carrying some papers, my passport, and a few of the more important things in a flat briefcase that I used as a backrest to cushion the ride. To add to my problems, I forgot to pick up the briefcase when we got off the carriage. I was so worn out and confused that when I discovered my carelessness I could have kicked myself. Fortunately, in those days Chinese people travelling in China or going to Hong Kong evidently did not need a passport. At any rate my lack of documentation caused no problem at all. When we reached Guangzhou there was again a little time before our night boat sailed, so we looked up H.H.'s brother-in-law, T.K. Liang, who had been my host in Beijing in 1926. In 1937 he was the manager of the Guangzhou branch of the Shanghai Commercial Savings Bank, which he served for many years.

Mamma was much relieved to see me safely home again. It happened that Chinese ladies in Hong Kong had been able to organise the Hong Kong Chinese Women's Relief Association, and both Mamma

and Vic had been invited to attend the inaugural meeting that afternoon. They both asked if I would deputise for them, so off I went on my own merely to represent them—but then found myself immediately roped in to serve as the English general secretary. Madame Sun Fo was elected as president, Mamma as vice-president, and Madame T.V. Soong as chairman. On the committee there were many other important and well-known ladies who had come to Hong Kong from Nanjing, Shanghai, or elsewhere, together with some leading local ladies. The chairman's husband T.V.—the brother of the Soong sisters—had generously provided the association with its office accommodation in the Bank of Guangzhou building, which was conveniently located at the northeast corner of Ice House Street and Des Voeux Road in Central District. As a result of my appointment, I was immediately kept busy going to the office every day and participating in everything I could help handle. The Association was a godsend to many of us. It gave us something useful to do, and we felt that we were contributing to the war effort to some small degree.

A couple of weeks after the ladies organised the Hong Kong Chinese Women's Relief Association, the wife of the mayor of Guangzhou, Wu Teh Cheng, arrived in Hong Kong. Instead of merely joining the group that had already been established, she set up another organisation called the Hong Kong New Life Movement Association, which is an abbreviation of a long Chinese name. Madame Wu was elected Chairman of this Association, and Mamma became its Vice-Chairman. One of its main activities was to raise funds, so every day Madame Wu and Mamma would call on various wealthy and well-known people and try to persuade them to donate generously to the war effort. This must have been quite tiring to both Mamma and Madame Wu, but they had quite good results.

The ladies of both relief associations kept themselves busy, each person handling separate responsibilities, while some jobs were shared by all. In each association there was a salaried clerk and menial staff to run the place, while the ladies dropped in when they had the time or whenever there was a meeting scheduled. Many went along just for the fellowship. In those days most of the ladies had household servants to do domestic chores, and only a few had jobs outside the home. Consequently many of them had a great deal of leisure time, and this was probably the first time they had experienced "corporate life" outside the home. Some were, or became, expert at raising funds because they could approach

their rich friends and induce them to contribute, whereas I was awkward at this kind of activity. I thus left fund-raising to others and attended more to organisational work.

On the practical side, because the Chinese Army was short of medical and surgical supplies, the ladies of the New Life Movement Association decided to help provide surgical supplies for use at the "front." At the New Life Association headquarters, there was often a long table covered with a white linen tablecloth piled up with gauze, cotton wool, and other medical supplies. Anyone with clean hands, time, and patience could join in and roll bandages, make cotton wool balls, or prepare surgical dressings. Later, when they were used for dressing wounds, the surgical supplies would be sterilised. By making surgical dressings the women felt that they were doing something useful.

After Mamma died, the young lady who served as the New Life Association's secretary wrote a eulogy for her, telling how very often Mamma—when not out with Madame Wu raising funds—would join the group of ladies to make surgical dressings. Some people might think that this endeavour was a waste of time, but it was much less expensive than buying ready-made dressings at a time when we wanted to stretch scarce funds as far as possible. Even in civilian hospitals in Hong Kong and China, especially in the charity wards, this sort of work would often be undertaken by the nurses and the hospital staff.

Another urgent need was for warm clothing for the soldiers, because winter was approaching and China was ill-prepared. Fortunately, filled cotton wool garments—short, padded jackets buttoning down the front and padded trousers—were as commonly used then as they are today. Mamma was so enthusiastic about her war work that she decided to involve her class of two dozen students in the free Buddhist seminary. She had them temporarily discontinue their regular religious lessons in order to work on donated or borrowed sewing machines or to sew by hand in order to produce padded garments for the soldiers. She felt that this service work also had its moral value in the development of her trainees. Compassion and universal love are strong moral principles among Buddhists, and Mamma used that expression as the motto for her school and seminary. She herself served as the principal of both institutions. She participated in the selection of students to be admitted to each institution and went there every day.

As soon as we arrived in Hong Kong from Nanjing and Hankow, H.H.

and I decided that it was time to confide in Father about our relationship, as I had previously promised to do. Naturally, I would need to put everything down in writing for him, and I wrote the letter with great care in longhand on note paper. Many years later, after Father had passed away, his secretary kindly returned to me two thick files of my correspondence with him. More recently when reading them through, I was delighted to find the original of that crucial letter. It was dated September 2, 1937, which indicated that I must have written it soon after I returned to Hong Kong. Japan had bombed Shanghai on August 13, but did not immediately bomb Nanjing. We probably left Nanjing during the last ten days of August.

The image of a young woman writing to seek her father's acceptance and approval of her boyfriend may seem rather formal in today's world. It must be remembered, however, that our family was somewhat different. We did not see our father everyday, and when there was anything special to contact him, he usually asked us to "give him a memo"! A few direct quotations from that letter may help to explain:

I . . . write to you concerning my personal affairs, about which I wish to take you into my confidence. . . . I trust your affection for me and interest in my welfare will enable you to give me a sympathetic hearing.

I have known S.S. Tseng [that is how he used to Anglicise his name and initials] as a good friend for more than eleven years, and although he has all along been more or less in love with me and refused to marry any other girl, I was not prepared to consider matrimony formerly.

Then I told Father how I had recently begun to appreciate H.H. and his genuine, unselfish love for me, and added:

I must also frankly tell you that I have reciprocated his love, and never before in the thirty-odd years of my life have I fallen in love as deeply as this time — probably more so because it has been backed by such a long friendship.

After that, I wrote of H.H.'s education and training in Japan as a mining engineer and listed some of his jobs. Finally, I said:

Mr Tseng speaks over a dozen Chinese dialects as well as Japanese, Russian, and some English. He may not impress people much on first acquaintance, but proves to be a true

## Marriage

and reliable friend the more one gets to know him. I feel confident that he has a future ahead of him when the right opportunity comes, and I have no hesitation in entrusting my future to his care.

We both like hard work and a simple life and have many interests in common. All through these months he has been a devoted adviser and friend and has always put my welfare first. On my recent return it was mainly through his energetic persuasions that I decided it was wise to come back, and all through the trip his help has been immeasurable. For the time being our plans are indefinite, because we want your approval and he needs a job, but we are both serious and look forward to a happy future.

Thanking you in anticipation,  
Yours affectionately,  
(Signed) Irene

Having thus tried to take Father into my confidence, I felt I had to wait patiently (or impatiently) for his reply before taking any other action, including discussing the matter with Mamma. She realised that H.H. and I saw each other from time to time, and in various indirect ways I sensed that she did not approve of him for a variety of what seemed to me unimportant reasons. It was true that he could in no way compare with her favourite son-in-law, M.K. Lo, because H.H.'s spoken English and Cantonese were both weak. This did not matter to me, as I had learned a good deal of Mandarin while I was in London—first by taking some tutoring from a famous Chinese author, Lao Sheh, and then by practicing with fellow students from north China both in London and in New York. Moreover, I had no difficulty understanding his Cantonese, which he had picked up from his many Cantonese relatives and friends. Further, H.H. was relatively quiet and did not impress people as M.K. did.

However, I felt the most important factor was that Mamma was not happy with the idea that if I married H.H. I would probably be living far away in north China or elsewhere, whereas all her other sons-in-law lived in Hong Kong, so they and her other daughters were easily accessible to her. Although I had been away from home for many years, I had been able, through constant correspondence, to keep in close touch with her, and it was perfectly understandable that she would be reluctant to let me disappear again from her environment. She was afraid that if I married H.H. I would move away permanently. This is

only my conjecture about the situation. Mamma and I never discussed it face to face, but occasionally she would make some little remark or facial expression if she saw H.H. with me. That made it quite clear to me that she did not approve of the match. It hurt me terribly that she was not pleased, so I waited anxiously for a reply from Father to my letter. However, for some reason or another, he did not read it straight away. He told me later that he had thought it was something I was trying to tell him on Mamma's behalf, and as she had died, he didn't even open the letter!

Eddie had gone up to Shanghai during the late 1930s and stayed until October 1937 when, chiefly because of the war, he brought his children back to Hong Kong. Since I had also returned to the territory after my brief six months of service at the Ministry of Education in Nanjing, our parents wanted to give me a birthday party to welcome all of us home. I suggested that it was a good opportunity to have a family group photo taken, so they sent for a photographer, not realising that this was to be the last photo of Mamma taken with all of us. There were 41 in the group, plus Eva's dog Missie. Brother Wing's daughters had been married, and were not invited. Eddie's wife was still in Shanghai. Otherwise, all of us were there.

These were busy times for Mamma. She went to the Hong Kong Chinese Women's Relief Association whenever there was a committee meeting and at other times when she was in town and was free to see how things were going, as she undertook her duties as vice-president with all seriousness. Having also been "roped in" by Madame Wu Teh Ching to become the Vice-Chairman of the New Life Association, she was even busier there. Almost every day, Madame Wu and Mamma would call upon people, trying to raise funds. As she was also Superintendent of the Tung Lin Kok Yuen Temple, she tried to be there whenever she had time to call her own, so she was more or less constantly busy.

In 1937 the Macau Po Kok Free School was still running, and Mamma was registered as its Headmistress. Quite often she went over to Macau on weekends to deal with school matters, although she had someone stationed in the Portuguese enclave to assist her. She would generally return to Hong Kong on the Sunday night boat, which sailed at 3 am. Although she normally boarded the boat early in the evening, she hardly ever slept. Because she was a light sleeper, when the main body of passengers boarded and the ship started its journey, she would



invariably be woken up repeatedly by the noise and motion. The boat usually docked at the Hong Kong wharf around 6 am. Instead of going home and catching up with some sleep, Mamma would normally go straight to the Tung Lin Kok Yuen Temple and Po Kok School in Happy Valley and take part in whatever activities were going on at the time. It was true that she did have a little room there with a bed, dressing table, small bathroom, and toilet, but she seldom had much real rest.

All this went on for Mamma week after week. Overshadowing everything was the war in China, which distressed her greatly. She could not help thinking and worrying about the suffering of the soldiers and their families. Mamma's health had not been good, and it was almost inevitably going to break down under the added mental and physical strains. She suffered from both asthma and insomnia.

A couple of months after we started work at the relief association, I had a bad attack of tonsillitis and asked Dr S.P. Li to operate on me. As usual, Mamma requested permission to watch the operation—in which she took a genuine and intelligent interest—and Dr Li kindly consented. There was some little problem, and I seemed to lose my voice for a couple of weeks, but Dr Li assured me that it was only temporary and I communicated by writing brief notes. In a way, it turned out to be a blessing in disguise, as it gave me a couple of weeks of enforced rest. When the bill came, I commented that it was quite an expensive operation. Dr Li replied: "It was done under your mother's personal supervision." We both had a good laugh over that.

The ladies of the two associations were exceedingly kind to me during my hospital stay. Quite a number came to visit, and some sent baskets of beautiful flowers. When I had too many of these, I would ask that some of them be sent to the large general wards for poorer patients, many of whom did not have any flowers. On one or two days I even had too many visitors, several at a time. In those days the hospital had not yet introduced restrictions such as specified visiting hours to enable patients to rest during the day. There was an incessant stream of visitors to my room, and I found it tiring just to turn my head from one to the next—especially as I did not know many of them personally, having been acquainted with them only recently through the associations. I found it all exceedingly tiring, particularly since I did not sleep well at night. However, I was in the best accommodation available, having one of the corner rooms with a little balcony that overlooked the front garden on one side and the race course on the other. On race days, if my visitors or

I wanted to, we could even watch the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club races.

We also had a good view of Mamma's temple, with its beautiful roof of golden tiles. Mamma, who managed to spend a good deal of time with me, was an excellent nurse and we enjoyed each other's company. One day she told me: "Some of my friends have suggested that it might be safer for the temple to have its roof painted over with black paint, so that it won't be so conspicuous, but I am reluctant to do that as I hate to spoil its beauty." I agreed with her and added that I knew many of the Japanese to be good Buddhists and felt sure they would not bomb the temple. Almost superstitiously, we both felt that the building would receive divine protection.

At the Hong Kong Chinese Women's Relief Association, it was Mamma who first thought of utilising some of the funds that had been raised to order six complete sets of surgical equipment. These came with an operating table and were destined to be sent to the Chinese Army at the front, so that the wounded soldiers could be treated as soon as possible without having to wait until they reached a distant hospital. Our good friend, Dr S.P. Li, had been asked to advise on the instruments and other equipment to be ordered. In due course, the equipment arrived, packed in six wooden cases. Mamma felt that we should have the cases opened and checked to make sure of the proper contents and absence of breakages. She arranged for Dr Li to come over and check them with her one afternoon after his clinic had closed. A couple of other interested ladies and I were also there. It was typical of Mamma, who was extremely conscientious, to want to make sure that everything was perfectly correct.

Some time in December 1937, the Women's Relief Association received a letter from the members of its sister association in Shanghai, saying that they had on their hands 50 wounded Cantonese soldiers and wanted to return them to their own villages via Hong Kong. They asked if we would be willing to find temporary accommodation for them and then make the necessary arrangements for them to continue home. Our committee discussed the idea and then approached the Tung Wah Hospital, the leading Chinese charity institution in Hong Kong. They said that they would be happy to have the soldiers stay in one of their wards, so the wounded men eventually came down by the Hankow-Canton Railway and spent a welcome few days recuperating in the Tung Wah. On New Year's Eve members of the association, under Mamma's

leadership, visited the soldiers and took them some little gifts. One of the men, who had lost an arm and a leg, told Mamma: "My mother did not want me to go to war, but I loved my country, so I insisted. Now that I am crippled I don't know how I can face her." Mamma tried to comfort him as best she could. However, she could not get to sleep that night thinking about it. The next day, January 1, 1938, one of the committee members, Mrs Wan Chik Hing, gave a tea party at her home and garden for the rest of the committee. Mamma took this as an opportunity to solicit small donations from the group, and these were given to the soldiers so that they would not have to return home penniless.

Meanwhile, in accordance with its custom every year, the Tung Lin Kok Yuen was conducting its annual week-long religious services during the beginning of the twelfth moon, which then coincided with the end of December. That year Mamma requested that the ritual be shortened by a couple of days, chiefly because she did not want the seminary students to take too much time off from the war work in which they were engaged. Usually, when she took part in these services, she invariably stayed in her little room in the temple for the whole week. However, by the evening of January 2, she could hold up no longer and had to quit the services.

It so happened that our good friend Djiang Siao Mei and her husband, C.C. Chang, were visiting us at the time. Mamma had known Siao Mei quite well when we were fellow students in London. She and I had gone off to Littlehampton to study for our exams in the early summer of 1928, just before Mamma and I had to rush home to Hong Kong to attend Robbie's wedding. Mamma and Siao Mei liked each other very much, calling each other godmother and goddaughter. After Mamma and I left London suddenly in 1928, Siao Mei had stayed on and quite soon, still at the age of 19, earned her Ph.D in economics from the London School of Economics. She then returned to China, worked for the Bank of China, and married C.C., who was the younger brother of the minister of railways. In due course they became proud parents of a baby daughter, Meijean, and since both were exceedingly busy with their work they employed a retired British nurse, Mrs Archer, to take full charge of the baby's care. When Mamma stopped in Shanghai *en route* to and from Nanjing in the early summer of 1937, Siao Mei had told her how worried she was about the baby due to the threatening war conditions. Mamma unhesitatingly told her: "Send the baby and Mrs Archer down to me; I'll be happy to have them." Siao Mei and C.C.

took Mamma at her word, so both Mrs Archer and little Meijeane accompanied her when she returned to Hong Kong after the Nanjing trip. In late December 1937, the young couple were in our home for a few days, mainly to visit Mamma and Meijeane and to celebrate the New Year with us.

On the morning of Sunday, January 2, H.H. visited us up at the Peak to wish us well for the New Year. Siao Mei and C.C. suggested that we go for a walk and make our way down Aberdeen Road to that bustling little township on the waterfront. I gladly agreed with the idea since when we were children, our old tutor, Mr Chiu, had from time to time taken us for part of that same walk, and I was pleased to revive those memories. Aberdeen revolved around fishing and provided a haven for many fisherfolk who lived aboard their vessels with their families. Aberdeen was also the centre of a thriving shorefront boat-building industry. We had some lunch in the town—which the Chinese call Little Hong Kong, and where the seafood is generally good—and then took a bus back to Central. Finally we took the Peak tram home, and C.C. and Siao Mei persuaded H.H. to come back with us for dinner.

Mamma was not feeling well and was advised to go home. When she reached there unexpectedly, we were all sitting round the table for dinner. She greeted us only briefly after she had mounted the stairs and carried on into her room. I could see that she was displeased to see H.H. there with us, but by then there was nothing I could do about it. If I had known that she would come home that evening, I would probably have advised him not to join us for dinner. As things developed during the next few days, I had a terrible feeling of remorse and guilt, and felt that unintentionally H.H. and I had added the "straw that broke the camel's back" regarding Mamma's health.

Mamma was quite ill, and we later learned that she had been to see Prof Gerrard a few days earlier. He had told her that she should stay in bed to rest, but she had said that she was too busy to do so. For several years she had suffered from asthma and diabetes, for which she used to give herself medically controlled injections, and in addition she had a "nervous heart" that developed palpitations. At night she found it difficult to sleep and during those last years could not lie down flat but needed to rest on several pillows, otherwise the asthma would bother her and make it hard to breathe. We informed her regular doctor, our cousin Dr S.C. Ho, and he was so concerned that for the next few days

he spent all his time with us up at the Falls. He only left when he was needed elsewhere to attend to a few of his most urgent cases. My sisters, Vic and Jean, came up to the house to help nurse Mamma, but I kept more in the background. I felt that she was so angry with me over H.H. that I hardly dared be at her side, because it seemed to upset her. I felt terrible about this and was ridden with guilt that took me months to get over. I stayed in the background but told the association over the telephone that Mamma was ill and that I would not be able to participate in the work for some time.

When I take stock of Mamma's activities over the fortnight proceeding her death, I now realise that she had definitely been burning the candle at both ends. Although she was a devout Buddhist, this did not stop her from being extremely involved with Christmas, which was even then becoming quite a commercialised holiday in Hong Kong. For as long as I can remember—at least since the 1920s—Mamma had organised a huge Christmas party, usually for lunch on December 25 itself. She would invite all of her own children and their spouses and children to celebrate the Christian festival with her. It was at these family gatherings that we became familiar with typical western Christmas fare, complete with roast turkey and plum pudding with little hidden trinkets, including a 22-carat gold half-sovereign. At that time, such coins could easily be procured from many jewellers or coin shops in Hong Kong.

That year, 1937, Florence and K.C. had booked to sail from Hong Kong on December 25, and consequently Mamma held her celebration party the previous day—which happened also to be her lunar birthday that year, the 22nd day of the 11th lunar month. I remember that she had invited Mrs Ho Fook, our Third Paternal Aunt, to join us for the occasion, probably as she was a widow and had been so exceedingly kind to Mamma when Eddie was a baby. There were more than twenty of us, and we all sat at a long table with Mamma hosting the proceedings. Her health was deteriorating and despite the general feeling of good will surrounding the party, the event must have been tiring for her. That Christmas party took place just thirteen days before Mamma passed away.

Ah Saam, my amah from Nanjing, had gone home to her village, but she came to Hong Kong and rang me up on January 3. Her voice reminded me that I really needed someone around whose sole responsibility was to help me, so I asked her if she could come to the Peak. Before I departed from Nanjing, I had asked Ah Saam to take care

of my simply furnished apartment and to do whatever she thought best with my belongings as circumstances developed. Of course I had no way of knowing how long I would be gone. H.H.'s Fifth Uncle promised to help Ah Saam and to pay her wages regularly on my behalf, and he also visited the apartment from time to time. One day he told her to look through my clothing, select those items she thought I was most fond of, and mail them back to me in Hong Kong. She took his advice, which is how a few of my most useful articles of clothing remained with me. Unfortunately, I never did recover my favourite books, typewriter, Ph.D certificate, and other personal treasures. They were all lost where I had left them in my office at the Ministry of Education.

Some considerable time after I left, Ah Saam had been walking along our street in Nanjing when a policeman stopped her and told her she was the only person still living in that street. He strongly advised her to go home to Kwangtung. It says something for the type of person she was that she was still there at her post. Ah Saam did go home to her native village and was so exhausted physically and emotionally, having been through such times, that she stayed there a couple of months before coming to Hong Kong to look for me. As it turned out she arrived at just the right time, a couple of days before Mamma passed away on January 5. I was mentally, physically, and emotionally exhausted. Worst of all, I felt miserably guilty that Mamma did not like H.H., and yet my heart and my intuition told me I should not give him up. Ah Saam was dedicated to me and helped a lot. She stayed until I left for Beijing in 1942, when I was in different and difficult circumstances.

Eva was quite busy with her job with the Medical Department teaching at Queen Mary Hospital, but when she realised how sick Mamma was, she too came up, as did dozens of relatives and friends, who hoped to see Mamma. However we could not allow it, except for a few special visitors. The following day, we realised that there was no hope of Mamma recovering, so we let in those who had come again to see her. Some stayed on until the end. As soon as Father heard of Mamma's serious illness, he had come over from his house—which was just a long footpath away from the Falls—and spent a few nights with us there. Lady Margaret also came from our town house, Idlewild.

Mamma's deputy at the temple, Miss Lam Ling Chun, and about a dozen of the seminary students came up to the house to pray at her bedside. Buddhists believe that the deity Amita Buddha leads departing souls to the world of everlasting happiness in the western heavens. When

a person is about to die, they advocate that those around the patient chant the name of this deity—Naam Mo O-Mei-To Ful, a six character phrase—over and over. They have even devised a musical tune to do this, which is soothing both for the sick patient and for the troubled family. I for one found it to be so. Mamma had often advocated that this sort of procedure be done for a dying person, and we were thankful that during her last hours we were able to put into practice what she herself had so often advocated. It happened that one of Mamma's two Buddhist masters, the abbot from Ch'i Hsia Monastery near Nanjing, was in Hong Kong, so he came to lead the prayers at her bedside. She used to say that she would not want to have a long, lingering illness, as it would be so uncomfortable for her and such a strain for those nursing her. On the other hand, she did not wish to have a sudden death, because she wanted to see for the last time those who were near and dear to her. She did not want to outlive her usefulness and merely linger on, but preferred to go when she could still be a contributing member to society and perhaps be truly missed. In all this, her wishes were fulfilled at the end.

The day before Mamma passed away, the weather had been dull and miserable. It was the kind of weather she did not like, and she even commented on it. However, the next day there was beautiful sunshine, which made her feel much more cheerful. It seemed to us that in this and in many other little ways she had been blessed with a good ending, for which we all felt humbly thankful. Because of her bronchial asthma, Mamma had some difficulty in breathing, so she was given oxygen. This was kept on as long as it was medically appropriate, which our cousin S.C. and Eva were able to decide. Eventually she passed away peacefully at about 2 pm on that sunny January 5, 1938, surrounded by her loving family. Lady Margaret and her two sisters-in-law, Mrs Ho Fook and Mrs Ho Kam Tong, were seated at the foot of her bed. Uncle Ho Kom Tong had come up to the Falls the previous day. When Mamma had apologised for not having been able to hear him sing at a charity concert, he immediately sang his operatic song for her by her bedside. Father was there along with most of our siblings. Florence and K.C., of course, had just sailed on Christmas Day, 1937, taking along their two older children. At Mamma's suggestion, they left the youngest, one-year-old Wendy, in the care of two amahs at the Falls.

In the book I wrote previously about Mamma, I gave a detailed account of her funeral arrangements. There was another aspect to the

event that also bears telling. This was the shock and mental agony I went through in the weeks and months following Mamma's death. Only gradually was I able to return to a more normal—though still sad—state of existence. All the sisters and many members of their families had come home to stay with us at the Falls, and most of them were sharing rooms. I thus felt it would be much better for all if I stayed in Mamma's little cubicle just outside the shrine on the top floor of the house. She had arranged for the addition of a little bathroom and toilet on the opposite side of the landing, so it was convenient, but small. I felt that by living there I could be alone with my thoughts and feelings. If I could not sleep, it would not disturb anybody else if I turned on the light to read or walk around a little.

My digestion had never been strong, so I decided to go on a vegetarian diet for a while, with one or two simple dishes that I knew agreed with me. In traditional Chinese custom, quite often mourners have a vegetarian diet until the funeral is over or even until the entire seven-week period required for all the funeral activities is complete. However, I changed my diet more for health than for religious reasons. Among other foods, I relied a good deal on tofu (soybean curd), fresh mushrooms, and a vegetable vitamin B extract called marmite, which was made in England and easily procurable in Hong Kong. I had actually learnt about marmite from Mamma, who ate it quite often. One day Vic and M.K., realising how sad and worried I was, tried to comfort me by saying that Mamma had probably been considering my welfare when she expressed doubts about H.H. and that I should not take the matter too much to heart. I forget what they said exactly, but the mere fact that they tried to comfort me helped. Meanwhile, my sisters Jean, Grace, and Florence and their spouses were very sympathetic and understanding.

Florence and K.C., who were then residing with his parents in Penang, had been sent two wires, one informing them of Mamma's illness and the other telling of her death and asking what arrangements they desired for the care of Wendy. They wired back leaving the decision to us, knowing that I would be happy to keep an eye on Wendy and her two amahs. The morning after Mamma's death, one of the children, Daphne, then aged two and a half, woke up and said: "Where's Grandma? Grandma came and kissed me and pointed to her own cheek." In a similar way, quite a few other relatives and friends, one as distant as Manila, reported that they "saw" Mamma that night. Mamma's presence seemed to be everywhere, or was it indeed something more?



I think what got me back under control was again being plunged into war work and added voluntary social welfare services. I first was appointed as one of the two female members of the Po Leung Kuk Board for that year. The kuk had been established many decades before by the Chinese community in Hong Kong to look after the welfare of young women in moral danger, or to care for children whose mothers had been sent to prison or the hospital, with no relatives able or willing to care for them. Originally, the annually appointed board consisted of men only, but in 1937 this policy was changed and two women together with several men were appointed; the following year, I was one of the two. Our duties required that we attend meetings at the kuk in late afternoon and early evening several times a week. A clerk from the office of the Secretary for Chinese Affairs (later renamed the Secretary for Home Affairs) would also be there to advise the directors on the usual procedure for handling each case. I felt this to be rather a waste of time, as we did not seem to have much real say in the matter. However, on Sunday mornings board members met the inmates in person and there was a regular roll-call, all of which was more interesting to me. Board members then adjourned and had lunch together, a practice that I appreciated since it gave me a chance to get to know my colleagues, most of whom were leading businessmen and philanthropists.

There had always been a spirit of fellowship amongst each group of directors, and they are remembered in accordance with the fact that they were on the board in the year of a particular chairman. The chairman for our year was Mr Ngan Shing Kwan, owner of the China Motor Bus Co that ran Hong Kong Island's omnibus services. The other woman member was my cousin-in-law, Mrs Edna Ho Leung, the fifth daughter-in-law of our Third Uncle, Ho Fook, she was also M.K.'s eldest sister. In addition to their other duties, the directors were expected to contribute or to raise funds for the kuk, which again floored me. I could only do what little my meager resources allowed, but fortunately my colleagues were quite understanding.

All this hard work helped me to overcome my grief at Mamma's passing. As life came back to normal, H.H. and I decided to marry after the end of the mourning period of 27 months. The marriage was set for September 11, 1940. Our wedding was to be held on the tenth day of the eighth month according to the lunar calendar. The 15th of that month was the Moon Festival. One of the Liu uncles and his wife deputised for

H.H.'s parents at the wedding ceremony. Afterwards we spent a few days on honeymoon at a hotel in Macau. When we returned to Hong Kong we first stayed for a couple of days at the little Arlington Hotel on Nathan Road, Kowloon.

According to traditional Chinese custom, married daughters do not spend their Lunar New Years nor the three important festivals at their parents' home. This ban involves the Dragon Boat Festival (fifth day of the fifth month), Moon Festival (15th day of the eighth month), and the Winter Festival (the winter solstice, which invariably falls on December 22 or 23). Breaking the ban is supposed to bring bad luck to the maternal family. Lady Margaret was a staunch upholder of traditional customs and had reminded me of this particular taboo. She advised us not to return to Idlewild to pay our respects at the family shrine and to her until the day after that Moon Festival. In fact, ever afterwards, we never spent Lunar New Year at my maternal home, even after Lady Margaret had passed away.

During those few days at the Arlington Hotel, we made personal calls on Uncle and Aunt Shen—who were doubly related to us, because Uncle Shen's own mother was the one and only Grand Aunt in the Cheng family. She was the only daughter and had seven brothers, so her parents had decided that whenever she brought her children home to visit any of them, the children were all treated as if she had been a son as well and not a daughter. Thus those children were all treated as sisters and brothers of the Shen grandchildren and were not referred to as cousins. There were another couple of cousins by the surname Tseng, and it took us a long time to figure out how we were related to them. Uncle Tseng remembered that he and my father-in-law had always called each other "cousin." But he also knew that he was not a descendant of the famous Lin, so when I tried to find out from Uncle Tseng how exactly the families were related, he had forgotten the connection. Finally, some Cheng cousin of H.H.'s in Shanghai was able to satisfy my curiosity by explaining that the connection went back one more generation. He told me that this uncle's great-great-grandfather was a brother of Lin's mother. In China, the "cousin" relationship can go on indefinitely. Descendants of brothers have the closest relationship and are regarded as sisters and brothers if they are from the same generation. If not, rank assumes the next line of importance and is clearly specified—as with Brother Wing's eldest daughter, who called me aunt although she was almost a year older.

H.H.'s sister Mary and her family were on our list of people to visit, and they also came to see us when we moved to our little home out in the New Territories near Fanling. The small factory that H.H. intended to set up for making paper and soap was downstairs, and we lived in the upstairs rooms. Our home was simple and clean with rattan furniture, which is much cooler in the summer weather. Of course, we had the loyal Ah Saam, my Cantonese amah from Nanjing, to take care of the household chores.

After a couple of months, during one of the long holiday weekends in Hong Kong, Mary and her family came to spend a few days with us. The first day we took them around and did some sightseeing. The next morning I thought I felt a little morning sickness. Mary was delighted and fervently wished that it was true. This was because her second elder brother Dick and her first cousin Dr Hosien Tseng, whom she called Eldest Brother, had no children. Each had adopted a little girl to bring up as their own. When the weekend was over, I telephoned Dr Gordon King and he told me over the phone to take care of myself, wait a couple of months until the prognosis was confirmed, and then go to see him. Everything went as he said, and I began to prepare for the birth of our child.

Before the baby was born, I first wrote to consult my mother-in-law, who was then living in Beijing. She advised me that the sons of our next generation were given the name classifier Jia, meaning "of the family," while for the daughters it was Ji, meaning "to continue" or "to follow." If I had a daughter she suggested adding the word Yu (jade), and asked if I liked it. I fully agreed, and that is how our little girl was first given the Chinese name of Ji Yu. Naturally, I also wanted to give her an English name, as I knew she would be learning English as well as Chinese. I had a good friend who was called June and decided that if I had a daughter during the month of June, that must be what she would be called. I forget what masculine names we had planned.

H.H. and I got busy making preparations for the arrival of the baby many months hence. I bought some fine wool—white, pink, and blue—and began knitting and crocheting some baby garments. I could do these handicrafts and was able to obtain well-illustrated craft books from which to work. We bought cloth napkins (diapers) and assembled the layette gradually, as we had plenty of time to attend to these matters. Unfortunately, after some more months an epidemic of malaria broke out in the New Territories. When Dr King heard of the trouble, he

forbade me to continue living in New Territories unless the whole house was fully screened. It was almost impossible to avoid exposure to mosquitoes in the rural area in which we lived, and Dr King told me that as I was pregnant I could not take quinine. The alternative was to ask Father if he would allow me to go home to stay at the Falls. So I wrote to him explaining the full facts, and I gratefully received his consent. H.H. stayed on at the factory but came home to be with me at the Peak for the weekends. Occasionally I would go out to the factory for a couple of hours during the day to see how things were progressing. The mosquitoes, of course, do not usually come out until evening.

If it could be afforded, the assistance of an amah was convenient in Hong Kong. She could help perform some of the duties that are usually left to the housewife in western countries. One of these tasks was to look after a newborn baby, unless one was fortunate enough to have some relative with the time, ability, and willingness to help. I was not so fortunate, so before I was due to enter hospital for the delivery, I engaged an amah who had been recommended by one of my sister's amahs. Unfortunately she did not prove to be efficient, but I needed someone to help so I employed her until I could find a more suitable one.

After my marriage, I had not attempted to look for a job. There was enough to occupy my time for the immediate present, with living out in the New Territories and preparing for the arrival of my first born. I went to be examined by Dr King at regular intervals, in accordance with his instructions. Initially it was once a month and later more frequently. At my last visit to his office at the end of May, he told me that everything was getting on well, and the baby was expected after the middle of June. I remember vividly that he told me he would not have to give me a Caesarean. On the Sunday afternoon of June 1, I was paid a visit by an elderly friend who was like an "uncle" to me. Because the weather was very nice and I felt fine and in an energetic mood, we took a short walk around Mount Kellett, which probably lasted for about half an hour. When the friend left, I had my evening meal and a restful night. However, the following morning I seemed to be losing water from my uterus, so I took it easy, rested, and later reported to Dr King. He advised me to lie down and relax, which I did. The next day, Tuesday, my condition was the same, so the doctor said I must go to the hospital, though I was not really due for another fortnight or so. Even after I was in the hospital nothing happened. I had no pain whatsoever, though I

could distinctly hear the moans and groans of the other patients in the maternity ward who were awaiting their turn to go into the delivery room.

Early on Thursday morning, before breakfast, Dr King paid me an unexpected visit. He examined my abdomen and then said: "You had better let me do a Caesarean." I was naturally surprised and asked, "Didn't you say the last time I saw you that it would not be necessary?" He replied: "You have now lost all your water, and the labour will be very uncomfortable for you and risky for the baby." Naturally I conceded and agreed to the operation, as I did not want to lose the baby after having carried it for nine months. June's first photograph was an X-ray taken at the doctor's behest. Dr King then asked to see my husband. At first I did not think that his presence or opinion was necessary at that stage, because I could well decide for myself about the wisdom of a Caesarean, but the doctor still wanted me to ask H.H. to come along. When he arrived, Dr King simply explained the matter in his excellent Mandarin, and the two of them shook hands; nobody had to sign any document.

I was given a local anaesthetic and wheeled into the operating theatre at 11 am. I knew what was going on all the time, but they had deliberately placed a piece of equipment to block my view; if not, I would have been able to watch the whole proceedings from the reflection in the mirror above me. The good doctor kept me engaged in conversation by asking if I had a name ready for the baby, and I explained that we had consulted my mother-in-law about the matter and were prepared with a name for either sex. He asked me if I had worked out what names I would use in the event of twins. I said: "No, you would have told me if I were going to have twins, because you would have heard two heartbeats." In this way Professor Gordon King kept me totally calm and relaxed with his excellent bedside manner. It is true that there was considerable discomfort after the operation. The cost of the operation was much more than for a normal delivery, but when compared with the agonising cries of the other mothers in delivery, I am a strong advocate of the Caesarean operation being the easiest and laziest way of having a baby—especially when the mother is in her late child-bearing years.

When my daughter was 99 days old someone recommended another amah. H.H. happened to be with me when I interviewed her and judged her to be suitable. He strongly recommended her to me, so I

engaged her to replace the first one. In his own quiet, observant way H.H. was quite a good judge of human personality and potential. I suppose he developed this skill during the years he spent as personnel manager in a shipbuilding yard in north China and when he was head of the printing office of the Chinese Eastern Railway in Harbin with more than a thousand workers under him. As far as the new amah was concerned, I must say that in the years and decades to come, he was proved perfectly correct.

This amah, Hing Jieh as we called her, was really named Chan Siu-Hing and came from the district of Yung Kei in Kwangtung (later to be spelt Guangdong) province. She had been a worker in one of the silk filatures and had decided that she preferred to be independent and did not want to marry. However, in accordance with the prejudices of her district, she wanted to make sure that her own spiritual tablet after her death would not have to be placed in the paternal family shrine, which might cause bad luck to the family. Consequently, she was able to arrange to be nominally "married" to another family. After serving me and the nucleus of our family for several decades, she was able to retire to her native region. There she could stay with a niece whom she helped build a new house or with her brother, since his wife had died and she had helped with some home repairs. She even booked a burial site, together with a place for her spiritual tablet in a local nunnery. Hing Jieh was indeed a careful and resourceful person. She passed away peacefully in 1995 after a brief illness; typically, she had made full provision for her affairs to be dealt with properly.

When I was discharged from the Queen Mary Hospital after the Caesarian operation, I returned to the Falls with baby June, and there she developed steadily. At first, I did not have quite enough milk for her, but Dr King advised me to drink much more liquid, and the problem was soon solved. I also tried to toilet train her by carefully placing her on her own little pot immediately before and after each feeding and at suitable intervals in between. Soon, she seldom wet her nappy and almost never soiled it. One of my sisters had kindly given us a perambulator, which was almost in new condition. Each day the amah could wheel the baby out into the garden near our front entrance, and she would sleep comfortably in the warm sunshine and fresh air, only being brought in for her feedings and nappy changes. I weighed her and measured her height regularly and entered them carefully in a beautiful baby book that someone had given us. When I took her to the hospital for a regular check-up, I could report these details, and the

doctor and nurses were well satisfied with her progress.

From the beginning, I always had June stay with me at night, when I would be on full duty. The amah would assist me during the day, sometimes assuming the baby's care if I had to go out or was busy with other matters. I breast-fed the baby as long as I could, which turned out to be for just over six months. Actually when the Battle of Hong Kong started she was still entirely dependent on mother's milk, but with the stress of war conditions, my milk and her natural food supply steadily diminished. Then we had to change to Klim's powdered milk. But the war is another story.

Ever since my first trip to America, when Mamma presented me with a baby Kodak camera, I have always been a keen photographer. We had many photographs taken, both of June herself and with every conceivable member of the family, along with nurses, relatives, and friends. These pictures I carefully inserted into photo albums. As the years passed, they have served as excellent reminders of our happy lives in those days. With the passing of time and as our family circumstances changed, I usually had a photo of June taken on September 11th each year, which was H.H.'s and my wedding anniversary. I think this is a good way to mark a day that has special significance for most married people.

## War in Hong Kong

**B**y the autumn of 1941 we were living in troubled times. Most people in Hong Kong suspected that the territory would become embroiled in World War II, although there were some who believed that Japan would not dare attack the territory because it was a British colony. Numerous young and middle-aged men and women volunteered and received varying degrees of military training, so that should Hong Kong become involved, they could immediately join up and participate in its defence. Some of my relatives, such as my brother-in-law Billy Gittins (Jean's husband), and many friends were seriously preparing for the worst and becoming part of the territory's defence forces.

H.H. was already wholeheartedly engaged in his manufacturing business and had high hopes of putting his work on a successful commercial basis. After we arrived in Hong Kong from Nanjing in 1938 he spent much of his time visiting a wide variety of factories in the colony. Introductions were given to him by the chairman of the Manufacturers' Union, who was like a kindly old uncle to both of us. H.H. was determined to get something started on his own and felt strongly that in those days China was relying much too heavily on imported products, even for simple daily necessities. He wanted to work towards the industrial development of China. At first we asked Father's staff at Sang Kee, which normally handled all the routine work for his extensive rental business, to allow us to rent one of his ground floor properties in Hong Kong. This would have been sufficient for H.H. to try out his ideas in a small way, but the request was not granted. Later we asked Father directly for permission to live in his Macau house, where



H.H. could do some experimental work. This request was granted.

So as not to encroach too much on the house itself, a small rocky section of the top garden was screened off with wire netting to provide a working area. The necessary ingredients were then brought in, including caustic soda and coconut oil by the barrel—the former imported to Macau from Hong Kong. An old stamping press was set up, for which H.H. designed shapes and names for the various kinds of soap that he made. These included both samples of laundry soap and toilet soap. I was especially interested in his brand of glycerine soap, which was similar to Pear's glycerine soap, an English product that Mamma and many members of our family were particularly fond of. Somewhere, perhaps in a Hong Kong bookstore, H.H. found two heavy, well-produced, and nicely illustrated books that became vital to the venture. One was on general industrial chemistry, while the other dealt exclusively with the making of soap. He loved those books, both of which were printed in English, and referred to them constantly. He explained to me that it was much more important to be able to produce laundry soap than toilet soap because people used much more of it. In those days most households in Hong Kong and China still used long bars of Sunlight laundry soap instead of soap flakes or other forms of detergents to wash their clothes by hand. Most local soap products then made in Hong Kong or in mainland China were inferior to the Sunlight soap bars imported from England.

H.H. chose the brand name SANDRENE for his products, which was a combination of the names Sandy and Irene. His brother-in-law Tommy Lee, an American-educated Chinese, had given him the name Sandy because it sounded like the Chinese expression San Di, meaning Third Younger Brother, which his elders at home used to call him. Unfortunately, due to the increasing threat of war, soon after he had produced his first commercial samples of soap, the Hong Kong government forbade the export of caustic soda. Consequently, H.H. had to give up his experiments in Macau and return to the colony. Still bent on manufacturing, he then spent a considerable amount of time going around the New Territories, mainly by bus and on foot, looking for suitable wild plants with plenty of fibre that he hoped to use to make paper.

Eventually H.H. found a kind of wild hemp growing plentifully in the New Territories, the pulp of which could produce paper. He then rented a small two-storey house in Fanling with two bedrooms, a sitting

room, and other facilities upstairs and a ground floor that could be used as a research laboratory and small factory. Among other items, he bought a Chinese foot-controlled pounder, which is normally used to get the husks off rice grains but in this case helped to pulp the hemp. He got neighbouring farmers to gather the quantities of hemp he needed and brought in large barrels of caustic soda to produce a strong kind of paper. We both felt that this could be developed into a high-quality paper for writing or for printing books. When other ingredients were used, it produced a sample of something akin to blotting paper, which could soak up moisture.

After H.H. rented the little house, he employed Cheung Kai, a young cousin of Mamma's chauffeur, to assist him in his factory and at home. Ah Kai, as the manservant was known, lived with H.H. in the house. I remember that by early 1940 H.H. was feeling happy that he had at last produced samples of his product in a small way and was able to continue experimenting and producing until he felt confident to proceed on a larger scale. Cheung Kai served us dedicatedly and faithfully as long as we could use him, which unfortunately was only until early 1942, when tragedy struck.

After I moved back to Hong Kong Island, we had a telephone installed at the Fanling home and factory that served the business but also allowed H.H. and me to have daily communication. When I felt like it, I would go out to visit him at the factory, and he always came home to "The Falls" (my father's house, where I was living) for part of the weekend. By the end of 1941, I was still busily breast-feeding the baby, and I mainly stayed home at The Falls. Hing Jieh proved to be a most faithful and valuable assistant and companion to us and soon came to be regarded as a member of the family. She was perfectly devoted to us and especially to my daughter, whom she treated as her own child, always consulting her, rather than me, about what food she preferred to eat and so on. She loved her but did not spoil her. She taught Junie many moral principles, and I did not have to feel so guilty when later I often had to be away from home. If I were working during weekdays, or perhaps attending meetings after work, I always knew there was someone reliable at home who could act as a substitute mother and love the child.

Hing Jieh could neither read nor write, but was imbued with much Chinese culture and many fundamental principles. She did all the grocery shopping for us and concocted her own method to recall each item of expenditure, which she would later recite for me to jot down

and tell her the total. She was absolutely trustworthy, occasionally forgetting to charge me instead of ever overcharging. Once in a while, when I was short of cash, she would even lend me some from her savings, as she was thrifty and had few expenses. She never married but had a niece and a nephew in Hong Kong, whose careers I helped a little at her request. They each worked hard at their jobs and did well. Hing Jieh also had a brother, an elder sister, another niece, and other relatives in the country. She would sometimes ask me to write a letter in Chinese for her to send to her brother. While working for me in Hong Kong, Hing Jieh managed to join with a cousin to buy a flat in a tenement building, which was divided up into several cubicles. She reserved one of these for her own use. When I went to Britain in 1961 after retiring from the Education Department, Hing Jieh went back to stay in her cubicle. Later she moved to a larger cubicle with windows when it became available. Here she stored her things and some of my discarded pieces of baggage or furniture that she could use. She would not take on any other full-time job in case I might need her when I returned to Hong Kong.

When I returned from England, I had no home to go to and so stayed at the YWCA hostel. Although I was not a Christian myself, many of my friends were, and we all lived by the same sound principles that are common to all philosophies of life. Hing Jieh stayed on in her cubicle, but a couple of times a week she would visit the True Light Middle School where I was teaching in order to pick up my laundry. This she hand-washed for me, as was the custom then in Hong Kong. In September 1963 when I became Principal of the Confucian Tai Shing School, I shared a flat with a niece and her husband. They already had an amah, but I was fortunate enough to arrange for Hing Jieh to be employed by the Government as a school amah, so that she could help share the work of the menial staff and sleep on a couch in my office. Every Tuesday morning at tea break she would bake one of her renowned sponge cakes and have refreshments prepared for the secondary school faculty, for whom I was the Principal with full responsibilities. We could then easily sift through many of the school's minor matters, leaving the main ones for the more formal, regular Teachers' Meetings, so everyone was quite happy.

In 1967, when I left to live in the United States, Hing Jieh wanted to retire too, but her colleagues persuaded her to stay on for another term, until the end of the calendar year. Afterwards she went back to

live in her cubicle. Unfortunately, about a year later she fell and fractured a leg, so her niece arranged for her admission to a home for the aged in Hong Kong, where she shared a room with two other elderly ladies. She did not like this but had to put up with it for a while because the building containing her own flat had to be demolished. She received compensation for her share of the flat. With part of this money, together with her savings, Hing Jieh was able to make arrangements to return to live with relatives in her village. Her life was closely intertwined with mine until I emigrated to America. However, we kept in touch throughout the succeeding decades, even after she retired in the late 1980s to her home in the country, where she lived with a second niece and shouldered her full share of the expenses.

In 1988 when I led a special education tour to China, I asked her niece in Hong Kong to fetch her from the village and take her to Guangzhou, where I invited them to stay with me in a suite of rooms at my hotel I had reserved for that purpose. When Hing Jieh saw me, she handed me some old photos and souvenirs that she had kept specially for me and my daughter. She wanted to do this herself rather than leave it to others to do on her behalf after her death. Hing Jieh was delighted to see me again and had been hoping for a reunion ever since retiring to her village. From time to time, especially at Chinese New Year or on her birthday, June and I would send Hing Jieh a little money, but she told us that though welcome it was not necessary, as she was quite comfortable. Hing Jieh had even booked a plot in a cemetery and arranged that after her death her spiritual tablet be placed in the shrine of a Buddhist temple in her neighbourhood. She prepaid these arrangements in full. Hing Jieh's story well illustrates how an illiterate amah in Hong Kong or China could work hard and conscientiously, eventually saving enough to provide for a comfortable retirement.

Father and Lady Margaret—who were born in 1862 and 1865 respectively—were married in December 1881, when they were 20 and 17 years old by Chinese reckoning. By December 1941, they had thus been married for sixty years. According to Chinese custom, this is an important occasion because they had been together for a whole six-decade cycle, an auspicious period according to astrological tradition and well worth a big celebration. By then Father was in his 80th year according to Chinese count, which was another cause for celebration. Although Margaret was three years younger, custom deemed

it quite appropriate to promote her age to 80 as well, so that they could have a joint celebration. My parents had many friends not only in Hong Kong and China but also in other parts of the world, especially in the United Kingdom, where they had been regular visitors for many decades. As a result, the proposed celebration caused quite a stir. It was of course a time for the family to come together. Among them were Eddie and his family, who had already returned to Shanghai but had been invited by Father to come home for the family celebration to be held on December 2, 1941.

In Chinese custom, whenever a family holds a celebration or experiences an unhappy event such as a funeral or serious illness, it is normal etiquette for friends and relatives to automatically send their congratulations or condolences without waiting for an invitation or notification of any kind. Generally, news of such an event would be passed around by word of mouth, by telephone, and occasionally by an item in the local newspaper. If the relationship was close, it would be regarded as a serious omission, or at least a breach of etiquette, if there was no expression of good wishes or sympathy in one way or another. One's feelings could be expressed by a verbal message, in a personal visit, or where appropriate by sending some gift. Many of the gifts sent to Father and Lady Margaret for their celebration consisted of scrolls of silk or red paper decorated with beautiful calligraphy, paintings, or embroidery. A dozen or more of those from relatives or close friends took the form of large silk longevity scrolls. Inscriptions ran the full width of the silk material, each of which was two yards or more in length. They were mounted at the top and bottom on two thin bamboo sticks and carefully packed in a light frame of split bamboo, making a package approximately two feet by four. They were always delivered by special messenger from the scroll-maker's shop. There would be a single large character in the centre of the scroll to represent longevity, or perhaps four large characters to express some word of praise or maybe good wishes. On the upper-right side there would be a column of characters referring to the recipients, in this case my parents. At the lower-left side would be another vertical row of characters, giving the relationship and the name(s) of the sender. It was customary for the head of that household to add the names of the sons (and grandsons, if any) of their family. Female names were omitted. The scrolls were hung around the walls of the reception rooms at Idlewild in strict order of relationship and precedence, while many other gifts were also

appropriately displayed.

Preparations for the occasion started weeks or even months ahead of time. At the front entrance, a matshed would be erected with an ornamental design, like an elaborately decorated geometrical arch. Matsheds are made of bamboo poles tied together with thin binding strips and covered with thatch. They are still used in Hong Kong and China and are usually erected as shelters for Chinese opera houses at festive times. Our temporary structure created an archway over the front entrance and extended outwards beyond it. Among other benefits, it provided a covered area under which musicians were seated. The whole was decorated with hundreds of flowers and prominently inscribed with appropriate characters to mark the happy occasion.

When the great day arrived, Father and Lady Margaret decided that it would be a good opportunity to have a family group photo taken, so the immediate family members were notified to come early. Altogether, thirty of us were included in that picture. Several Chinese musicians were employed for the occasion, and their formal band helped maintain traditional protocol. Whenever a visitor or group of visitors arrived, the band would play a tune to inform the hosts of their arrival; conversely, when the guests departed, a different tune would be played to bid them farewell.

Inside, at the far end of the dining room in front of a beautiful longevity scroll, stood a long table upon which a bronze bust of Father, vases of flowers, and other decorations were placed. The doors of the sitting room just opposite the main entrance were left wide open instead of being closed as they would be on ordinary days. Guests came straight in from the front entrance and walked to the far end of the dining room. There, a master of ceremonies stood off to the left. It was his duty to announce the guests' arrival when the musicians struck up the welcoming tune outside. As the guests reached the appropriate distance from the longevity scroll, the master of ceremonies requested them to "perform the ceremony." Singly or in groups of two or three, they then made a deep bow to the scroll, which represented my parents. Standing at the visitors' right was another attendant who handed each celebrant a lucky red packet containing a little golden double peach as a symbol of good luck and blessing of longevity for the recipient. There were also some real ivory chopsticks ordered for the occasion, each engraved with characters stating that they were a gift from Ho Tung and Mak Sau Ying on the occasion of their 60th wedding anniversary and their joint 80th

birthdays. The chopsticks, each pair in a separate box, were also handed out at this time.

For part of the morning, Father and Lady Margaret were there to greet the guests and personally receive their traditional bows of respect. After this part of the ceremony was over, the guests were ushered to the enclosed veranda or to the Chinese reception room on the other side of the corridor outside the dining and sitting rooms. There they were served a bowl of sweet soup, with sweetened lotus seeds and a boiled egg. The refreshments also included noodles, which represented the idea of the hosts wishing their guests longevity in return. After they had eaten, the guests departed. However, there was also another large reception at the Gloucester Hotel that afternoon, where many international guests gathered to wish the couple continued health and happiness.

A few days after this extremely busy occasion, Father went off for a much-needed rest to Macau with a few members of his personal staff. For this reason, he was away when war broke out in Hong Kong early in the morning on December 8, 1941. Thanks to the international date line this corresponded to December 7 in the United States, when Pearl Harbor was bombed. Everything happened so quickly. Shortly after six o'clock on that fateful December morning, I came out of my room, which used to be Mamma's bedroom, and found Eddie at the top of the stairs. He said: "The lid is off!" explaining breathlessly that he had just heard on the radio that the Japanese had bombed Hawaii. War had started in the Pacific and Hong Kong was almost certain to become involved. Naturally everyone was excited, albeit a little apprehensive. Sure enough, later in the day we heard that Japanese troops were actually coming towards Hong Kong and were already in the New Territories. There could be little doubt about the impending danger, because the same day they also bombed Kai Tak airport in Kowloon and destroyed the few bombers, amphibious planes, and civilian aircraft parked there.

The Japanese had taken Guangzhou more than three years before, on October 21, 1938. Soon afterwards they had encamped their army along the northern bank of the Shumchun River, which separates the New Territories from China. Therefore, it had really been just a matter of time before they chose to come over. I shall not attempt to give a detailed account of the battle for Hong Kong, except to recount aspects in which I was personally involved at the time. The defence and fall of the colony is itself another story that has been adequately covered by

authors better qualified than I to do so.

A couple of months before hostilities broke out, the local authorities had been making preparations for the colony's defence. My family was informed that if and when war came, the government would have to commandeer our Peak home, the Falls, and that we would be given alternative accommodation. At about 11 am on the day the Japanese attacked, an officer arrived at the Falls and told us to gather our things and prepare to be transported to our new quarters. We had no alternative but to obey.

At that time our household was quite large and included Eddie, his four children, and his secretary, Miss Webb. They still had not returned to Shanghai after the celebrations held only several days before. My husband, H.H., had come to the Peak from his little home and factory in the New Territories to join me and our daughter June, then aged six months. Adding to our numbers was Mrs Archer, nurse and governess to the two little Chang children. Their mother was Mamma's goddaughter, who was working for the Chinese government in Chungking. Then there were our two baby amahs, Hing Jieh and the Changs' Hsu Ma, plus a couple of other women servants who attended to the general housework. One of the rickshaw coolies came along to help us during the day, although he returned to his quarters for meals and at night. At the time my sister Florence and her family lived in Kowloon, but the government decided that she and the children should be billeted with us. Her husband, Dr K.C. Yeo, then Medical Officer of Health for the New Territories, had to remain in Kowloon. Naturally, I welcomed their coming since the arrangement gave her a much greater sense of security. She joined us with her three children: Dickie, eight; Daphne, six; and little Wendy, five.

The small semi-detached house the government assigned to us was situated on a hillside, along a footpath higher than the main road. It was near the top of Stubbs Road, a short distance downhill, and on the opposite side of the road from the Peak School. Motor vehicles could not drive up to the house, and there was no provision whatsoever for an air raid shelter. Like many buildings built in the Peak District, the house was raised several feet above ground level because of the damp climate. There was a low basement at the front to store gardening tools. We used that basement as our air raid shelter. Many times each day, whenever we knew aircraft were overhead, we would all run out of the house and go into the basement. Quite often we could first see the planes



dropping their "exploding eggs," as they are called in Chinese, and afterwards we would hear the air raid sirens. Eddie loved to go out into the garden and watch the planes through his binoculars. I felt it was rather dangerous, but I did not dare interfere with what he wanted to do.

Eddie had his own way of doing things. Twice each day, he drove his four children and Miss Webb down to the Roman Catholic Cathedral on Garden Road to attend a service. As the air raids became more frequent, I ventured to say: "Eddie, don't you think it's dangerous to take all your children downtown through the raids? Why don't you leave them behind and perhaps just go down with Miss Webb?" He did not welcome the intrusion and told me to mind my own business. The next day, a government official came to the house and told us to send a representative to an address on the Peak to see about rations for our group. After the official left, we discussed it among ourselves and decided that someone would have to go on behalf of the group. Mrs Archer suggested that Eddie—who was out for a walk with his secretary at the time—would be the logical person to send. We all agreed, since he was the man of the house. When he returned from his walk, we told him what we had decided. The place where he should register us was only a little farther down Stubbs Road, not far from our new home. At first Eddie was reluctant to go, saying he did not know the way, but Miss Webb managed to persuade him to do so and offered to accompany him. The rickshaw coolie knew the way, so the three of them went off. They did not have far to go, and we did not expect them to be away for long.

When they did not return for some time, we did not think much about it at first. Sometimes when they went for a walk, they would not return home until supper time. In those days we ate quite early because of the air raids, so that we did not need to turn on the lights. However, we started to get worried when Eddie and Miss Webb had still not returned as the evening meal was about to be served. We were in a quandary about what to do. In normal times we might perhaps have phoned the police station to file a "missing persons" report, but during wartime conditions we felt that was not quite right. There was an emergency clinic on the Peak where my sister Florence used to work as a volunteer, but she had not gone there that day because her daughter, Daphne, was ill. Nevertheless, I phoned the clinic to say that we had two persons missing and asked if they had any information that might help

us. They advised me to phone the War Memorial Hospital, which I did.

As it happened, a niece of ours, Vivienne Ho, worked as a volunteer telephonist at the hospital. When she heard my query, she said that Uncle Eddie and Miss Webb had indeed been admitted. Eddie was being operated upon and so could not be seen by anyone that evening. On the other hand, if we wished to see Miss Webb, we could do so. I was stunned as I listened to Vivienne explain how the secretary had lost both legs and Eddie had lost one. Eddie also had more than one hundred shrapnel wounds all over his body. As we hardly knew Miss Webb personally, I felt there was no point in my trying to see her; the only person who might be of any help would be a priest. However, as she had already been to church that morning, the hospital deemed it unnecessary to ask that a priest visit her. I rang the hospital again later that evening. My brother's operation had been successful, and I was able to speak to the surgeon, Dr Kock, whom we knew quite well. He assured me that everything was going well for Eddie. Dr Kock asked how the rest of us were getting on, and I told him that several of us, including baby Richard Chang, were suffering from insomnia. As a result he was kind enough to send someone around with a supply of sedatives. The doctor also said we could ring him at any time if we needed his assistance or advice.

After dinner, we sent Eddie's children to bed as usual, and the three younger ones soon fell asleep. However, Eric, the eldest at age 15, stayed awake. After the telephone call, he asked me straight out: "Auntie Irene, is my Daddy dead?" I assured him that his father was not dead and decided that he was old enough to be told the truth about Eddie's condition. I explained that his father had been severely wounded. He then asked: "If Daddy dies, what will happen to us?" I told him: "Don't worry, Grandpa will look after you all, but you, being the eldest, must grow up and help your mother look after the younger ones." At the time, his mother was still in Shanghai while the rest of the family were temporarily stranded in Hong Kong until circumstances permitted their return home. After that conversation, I told Eric to go to sleep and not to worry. I must say that during the next few weeks he did seem to grow up considerably and shoulder (albeit prematurely) his manly responsibilities. Early the next morning I rang the hospital to ask after Eddie. They told me that he had had a good night and was doing well, but if there were any servants willing to donate blood it might be good to let him have some. He had naturally lost a good deal during the

operation. Unfortunately, none of the servants—not even the rickshaw coolies—were willing to part with their blood, which they regarded as precious even though they knew they would be generously rewarded. Eric heard this conversation and immediately offered to give blood to his father. That was good of him, but the hospital declined to take blood from adolescents. We told the rest of Eddie's children that their father had been wounded and operated upon and was resting in the War Memorial Hospital, which was just above our old homes, Numbers 49 and 50 on the Peak.

Later that day we decided to paste strips of paper on the large glass windows in the house, so that should the building be bombed they would not shatter badly. Sure enough, soon after we had accomplished the task, the house on the other half of the duplex received a direct hit, and our side of the building was badly shaken. Not only did the windows shatter, but the ceiling plaster came down like heavy rain. Everything inside the house was covered in debris. We adults sat down to discuss what we should do. There were Mrs Archer, who was slightly older than the rest of us, Florence, H.H., and myself. Having received a direct hit, we decided that we could not stay in that house and should try to take the children to the relative safety of Idlewild, where there had been no bombing. We did not even seek the permission of Lady Margaret, who was living there, since we seemed to have no alternative. I did telephone Vic and M.K., and they agreed it was what we should do. The trouble was that we had no transport. Our cars had been commandeered by the government, including the one belonging to M.K. and Vic. I therefore rang up the Falls and told the officers who were occupying it that we had ten children on our hands and that our assigned accommodation had been badly bombed. I asked them to provide us with the necessary transport to take the children to the relative safety of Idlewild. I felt that as we had previously relinquished the Falls for their use, it was only fair that they should now come to our assistance.

When I made the call, there was an air raid going on, but an officer at the Falls quickly rang me back. He told me to take all the children down to the main road – Stubbs Road, in front of the Peak School—where a vehicle would collect us and take us down to Idlewild. I told him that I felt it was far too dangerous to move the children until after the raid was over and asked if they could wait until then. Despite my request, they sent the transport at once. Not long afterwards, an

officer came up to the house to tell us it had arrived. We thanked him for having come but asked him please to first take our hand-baggage back to the Falls. This included essentials such as nappies for the two babies. We asked if, after the bombing was over, the vehicle could return to collect us all and take us directly to Idlewild. The bombing lasted quite a while. When the all-clear siren, a continuous high-pitched tone, was eventually sounded, I again rang the Falls to say we were now ready to be picked up. At first they told me they had no transport available and that we would have to wait. But some time later they again advised us to go to the Peak School, where they promised to pick us up. We decided it would be better for Eric to go to the hospital to help look after Eddie instead of coming with us. Eric then went on his way, while some of the remaining servants walked back to their quarters at the Falls. Some would make their way down to Idlewild during the next few days.

After gathering all the children, we started our evacuation. Mrs Archer called on the Lord Jesus; Eddie's children recounted some Hail Marys; my amah Hing Jie called on the Goddess of Mercy; and I happened to have a large, framed photo of Mamma with me, so I carried it and told the children: "Don't worry, Grandma is looking after you all. You don't need to be afraid." Our motley group left the little house, walked down the hill, and then crossed Stubbs Road to huddle on the other side like the pathetic group of refugees that we were. We waited for ages but no transport came. Finally, we saw a little four-seater car coming up the hill, and I stood in the middle of the road and flagged it down. I asked the uniformed driver if he had been sent to pick us up and explained that we were trying to get the children to a safer place. He had not been coming to collect us and was actually going about some other business, so I had to let him go his way. However, after he had travelled a short distance, he made a U-turn and came back. He told us that although he was exhausted and reluctant to go downtown again, he would make one more trip for us. We could pack as many as possible into his car, and he would drive us to Idlewild. It took some doing but we finally managed to squeeze in all nine children into that little car, together with Mrs Archer, Florence, H.H., Hing Jie, and myself. There were fourteen of us, excluding the driver!

When we were mobile, I thanked the driver from the bottom of my heart and asked him his name. I knew I would always remember it with gratitude. "The name is Knipp," he said. When I asked if he was a

relative of Dr Knipp who worked at Lingnan University, he said: "I am Dr Knipp." That took me completely by surprise because we had been colleagues for a number of years, although we had seldom met. I introduced myself as Irene Ho, formerly of the Department of Education at Lingnan. Times had changed both of us. Now he was in uniform and I had not recognised him, whereas I was a refugee woman with a group of children under her care. He undoubtedly never expected to see me in that plight. Many years later, when I revisited Lingnan after the war, I looked him up and thanked him once again for rescuing us. He was apologetic: "You must have been disappointed when at first I refused to take you." We had all been under pressure, and I was genuinely pleased to assure him that I fully understood the situation that he, too, had been in. I was truly grateful. Of course, during the cramped journey down to Idlewild there was little time for contemplation. I heaved a sigh of relief when we eventually arrived, a bit squashed but otherwise none the worse for the journey.

For safety's sake, Lady Margaret had moved down to the basement of the house, where there was a small cellar that in fact was now an air raid shelter. The basement was a reasonably large room. Several years earlier it had been converted to accommodate about ten large Chinese dinner tables for extended gatherings of the clan and close friends. In the room, Lady Margaret had set up a proper bed for her own use, while a few of her personal attendants slept on the floor near her. We decided that we would all do the same. As soon as we had paid our respects to Lady Margaret, I trooped all nine children upstairs to the little family shrine and the altar to the Almighty, which faced each other on the main floor. We lit the incense sticks, and I told each of the children to say their thanks for having arrived safely in whatever way appropriate to their own religion. Even at the Falls, it had been customary each morning for Mrs Archer to take Maejeane and Richard to Mamma's shrine to say "good morning to Grandma," while she also taught them to say grace and in other ways brought them up in the Protestant faith.

We were by no means out of danger, of course. Once the Japanese had entered the New Territories and reached the Shingmun Reservoir, they ordered the workmen there to turn off the water supply to Hong Kong Island, which affected the population badly. However, Idlewild was especially fortunate because in the little courtyard at the back of the front block it had a well that seemed to have an

inexhaustible supply of water. Lady Margaret was kind enough to allow people from the neighbourhood to come and queue up for water from this well. Each would be shouldering a pole with a pair of buckets, usually Standard Oil kerosene tins tied to each end with wire or string. There was a constant stream of these people coming and going all day long, so the side gates leading immediately to the inner courtyard were left open during daylight hours for their convenience. This arrangement continued right up until Hong Kong's water supply was returned to normal by the Japanese some time later.

Thus we all stayed at Idlewild, with the exception of Eddie and Eric, who were at the War Memorial Hospital on the Peak. Unfortunately for Eddie, the Japanese chose to bomb the Peak heavily day after day. The doctors were under considerable pressure and were probably not always able to give their patients the fullest of care. Eddie's wounds became septic and gangrene set in. Since things were not going well for my brother, it was understandable that during a visit from a Roman Catholic priest he asked to be moved to the Tung Wah Hospital where he had a good friend, Dr G.H. Thomas, an excellent surgeon who would take good care of him. That hospital was also quite crowded, but Dr Thomas managed to screen off a small corner for Eddie in one of the third-class wards. During the long road to recovery, the doctor decided that he would have to amputate Eddie's other leg as well. Eric continued to help look after his father, and eventually both of them returned to Idlewild.

Meanwhile, the war was getting worse. On Christmas Day 1941, after 18 days of intense fighting with heavy casualties, the Hong Kong government decided that it had no choice but to surrender to the military superiority of the Japanese aggressor. With the threat of air raids now over, Lady Margaret decided it was time to move back to her own rooms at the top of the house. However, before she was able to do so, first one batch of Japanese soldiers and then another turned up on our doorstep with other ideas. Scouting the streets and taking stock of their newly conquered possession, they could see that Idlewild was a stately mansion and decided to "borrow" first one room, then another and another, to use for their own accommodation. Finally, they asked that we all move out and leave the mansion to them. Fortunately this order was never carried out. Lady Margaret's nurse, Ms Cheng the Third, spoke some Japanese. Of course, H.H. had studied in that country and spoke the language fluently. Our unwanted Japanese guests thus found

that they had acquired two useful interpreters who were at their beck and call. As a rule they sent for H.H. most frequently.

Foodstuffs were extremely difficult to procure, so we had to be content with whatever was available. Our meals were still cooked by the kitchen staff, who brought them down to the basement for our consumption. We ate in a haphazard manner, not sitting around a table as we would normally do since the one large basement room served us for everything. Often, just after H.H. had started eating, one of the Japanese officers would call at the top of the basement stairs for "Teh San," which meant Mr Cheng in Japanese. H.H. would have to leave everything and go see what these self-invited "guests" wanted. Being December or early January, by the time he came down again the food would usually be stone cold and there was no way we could have it reheated.

One day the Japanese senior officer sent for H.H. and told him that he wanted to find a number of prostitutes for his men. H.H. told him quite frankly that he did not know any of these people and could not even tell him where they might be found. Later, one of Father's clerks, Jimmy, heard what had happened and suggested that, to keep the peace, if the Japanese would supply the transport he could lead them to some place where prostitutes could be found. They drove off to the Wanchai District and rounded up a couple of dozen. The Japanese officer then had the army doctor examine the women and turned away those who were diseased. Afterwards, he even had the audacity to ask H.H. if he would like to have one of them. H.H. was furious. He told them that he had his own wife and was thoroughly insulted by the offer. He did not tell me of this indignity until some days later.

H.H. tried to protect me from the horrors of the war by not telling me everything that he saw until some time afterwards. I remember one such incident that occurred at Idlewild soon after Hong Kong succumbed to the invasion. The Japanese collected many of their dead, piled them on the back of a truck, and brought it to our front entrance. The body of the most senior officer was brought into the house to lie in state in our dining room. A memorial service was held for those who had perished, then the truckload of bodies was driven away for cremation, after which their ashes were sent back to Japan. H.H. did not mention this to me for a long time.

Hong Kong was in turmoil immediately after the hostilities ceased, and within no time at all conditions became distasteful in many ways. It

will be remembered that the Japanese had stopped the water supply to the main island of Hong Kong as soon as they crossed the border. Consequently, all houses with flush toilets were affected, including Idlewild. The Japanese army officers and men occupied the house for about a fortnight before they moved away to be billeted elsewhere. When they left, we found that every single water closet in the quarters they had occupied was a disgusting mess, filthy and overflowing with excrement. Lady Margaret had to send for plumbers to clear them. At that time we were just beginning to learn that war, even for civilians away from the front, can be a demeaning and demoralising experience.

In the struggle to retain some sense of normality, simple daily routines began to take on fresh dimensions. Nothing could now be taken for granted, and it became important to ration what little reserves we had. The household did not provide us with any fruit, but a hawker came from time to time with fresh tomatoes that I bought chiefly for the children. I paid for the tomatoes out of the little cash I managed to have on hand. Because all our assets were frozen, we could not get at our funds in the bank. I was thus careful about conserving my limited cash reserves. Many weeks later, Lady Margaret's housekeeper was able to get some money, and I applied for reimbursement for the tomatoes. At first I was offered large notes that were harder to change and did not have the same purchasing power as those of lower denomination, so I refused. After explaining that I needed small notes to help make my little money go as far as possible, I finally got my way.

At the time hostilities broke out, I had been breast-feeding my daughter, who was then only six months old. The baby soon began to show signs of underfeeding. The anxiety and stress of war conditions seemed to be causing my milk to deteriorate in both quality and quantity. It was evident that I would need to procure a supply of powdered milk or some other form of preserved milk for Junie. One morning the director of Medical Services, Dr Selwyn Clarke, was in the neighbourhood and dropped in to inquire how we were all doing. I told him of my concern about the baby. Much to my delight, that same afternoon he returned and gave me a half tin of Klim powered milk that his wife had been using for their daughter. I felt deeply grateful and at first was hesitant to accept his generosity, but he insisted and I took it with sincere and humble gratitude.

When we first went downtown to live, bombing runs at the Peak intensified. As a result, many of our Peak servants became refugees and



made their way down the steep Peak Road to seek the relative haven of Idlewild. For some, this was a difficult journey. Among them was Second Auntie Leung, whose small feet had been unbound when she was a young woman but were still difficult to walk upon. Then there was the old baby amah, Yee P'aw, who had joined our staff when I was a baby and by then was over sixty years old. Being part of our extended household, the servants—each of whom had specific tasks to perform—attempted to maintain some sense of normality. I remember that the man whose job it was to feed the donkeys and other animals arrived at Idlewild carrying the large tortoise. He could not, of course, bring all the other animals with him.

As soon as the fighting was over, the Japanese sent out a proclamation to advise people to leave Hong Kong and return to their own villages. They knew it would not be easy to find sufficient food to feed the colony's huge population under wartime conditions. Many of our servants began making plans to return home. Some of them walked back up to the Peak to find out whether there was anything they could salvage, while at the same time assessing damage to the house. One of those employees was Miss Leung, who had been a companion to Mamma and who helped me greatly after Mamma's death by staying with me when I was hospitalised. Back at the Falls once more, she thoughtfully took the time to look through my things to find any articles of clothing that I might be able to use during the troubled times ahead. She stayed the night at the house, sewing my clothes inside her own bedroll. Then if she was searched by the Japanese on the way down, she could say that she was returning to her village and wanted to take her own bedding with her. I have always been grateful to her for what she did for me.

Later I too went up to the Falls. It was a miserable scene. Before the Japanese occupation, the Hong Kong government had used the premises to house one of its military units, which had, amidst its other equipment, a number of mules. Some of these stalwart animals had died or had been slaughtered. Their carcasses had simply been dumped into the empty swimming pool with some earth thrown over them. The once-elegant building itself had received a number of direct hits. One of the bombs had landed right on the shrine that Mamma had so treasured at the top of the house. I went up there and began looking through the debris. As luck would have it, I happened to notice a little crystal statue of the Chinese Goddess of Mercy, Kuan Yin, together with its tiny blackwood stand. I felt as though I had discovered a delicate

treasure and a reminder of our previously peaceful lives amid the turmoil of destruction. I was quite moved. When I returned to Idlewild, I dutifully reported to Lady Margaret what I had found and informed her that I intended to keep the Kuan Yin as a sacred memento, which is exactly what I did.

The little statue was not the only thing I discovered among the bomb damage. Before the war I had my Ph.D thesis typed in London and two copies, each about 600 pages long, sent to the Falls. They had not yet been bound, but I had stored them away carefully. Unfortunately, I found loose pages of the thesis scattered everywhere as a result of the house having been ransacked. I gathered together whatever pages I could find, but I did not have the courage to carry them downtown and perhaps antagonise some patrolling Japanese along the way. They would be particularly suspicious of someone carrying documents. Needless to say, all the papers eventually got lost during the occupation. After the war I wrote to England to ask the widow of my supervising professor, Mrs Hamley, if she could borrow a set from the London University library. It was she who had typed out the original thesis, and I hoped that she might be able to copy out another set for me. She learned that the library had also been bombed and many books destroyed, including those next to my thesis. Luckily, the thesis had survived undamaged, and the library allowed Mrs Hamley to borrow it to make me another set.

Soon after the fighting ceased in Hong Kong and before many of the shops reopened, roadside stalls began to appear along some of the side streets. These offered an odd assortment of farm produce, vegetables, and fruit plus some of the daily necessities of life, but generally at exorbitant prices. We sometimes went to see what we could find at the stalls. One day I noticed some tins of Klim powdered milk on sale, but at several times the normal price. Later, Vic's husband M.K. dropped in to see how we were doing in Idlewild, and I mentioned having seen the milk on sale but at such an inflated price. He told me in no uncertain terms: "If you want it, you had better grab it, otherwise the price will go higher and higher." I took his advice and continued to buy milk whenever I saw it on offer, despite the steadily rising prices, until I felt I had enough to last the baby for many months.

Because so many Peak household servants had come down to live at Idlewild, Lady Margaret became quite worried. She had her staff prepare a list of all the persons who were then gathered there and

showed it to me saying: "Irene, how am I to feed all these people?" It was indeed a long list, and Lady Margaret was genuinely concerned, feeling responsible for the welfare of her household. I reminded her of what Mamma used to say about our individual responsibilities to always look after old servants. Yee P'aw had been our baby amah for decades, and Second Auntie Leung had been with us in England and was Mamma's housekeeper and personal assistant for decades. Apart from these two, I also had my own amah. These people were all my responsibility as well. Naturally the Chang family took care of their amah. I told Lady Margaret that she should pay the rest of them whatever wages were due and let them go home to their villages. The Peak servants were watching and took their cue from us. Florence and her family returned to Kowloon, crossing the harbour by motor boat to be with her husband. H.H.'s sister Mary had consistently asked us to stay with her, and I decided to accept her kind offer. Once we moved off, the servants knew that it was time for them to do likewise. Thus the problem was resolved, or at least reduced, with Lady Margaret being responsible for the welfare of only her own personal servants and our two old amahs from the original Peak household.

It was early in 1942 when I took my daughter and her amah to live with my sister-in-law, Mary. Her household consisted of her husband Tommy Lee, who had served as one of the two introducers at my wedding in 1940; their daughter Diana, then aged 11; a cousin, George Y. Chen, who had served as best man at my wedding; and a manservant. They had an apartment in Kimberley Road, in the Tsim Sha Tsui district of Kowloon facing Hong Kong Island. The flat was just within walking distance of the Star Ferry and therefore convenient in normal times, especially as it was served by a number of bus routes running along Nathan Road. Of course by early 1942 things were not nearly as convenient as they had been before the war. The buses were not running normally, there was only a limited water supply, and the occupying troops had a nasty habit of breaking into private residences and "borrowing" whatever they liked. No doubt the sons of Nippon felt this was a conqueror's right. All Mary's beds had been taken this way, with the exception of a little folding canvas cot. The family managed to hide it during the daytime in a tiny room used by the manservant. Food was scarce and had become everyone's major concern. By the time we arrived, Mary and her family had already decided to get out of Hong

Kong and go into mainland China where they had many friends. Mary was busy sorting out her things, and from time to time her friends would drop in to purchase something from her. I remember being impressed by her ability to quickly name a price for any article someone was interested in buying.

Mary was always close to her elder brother, H.H., and we did think about joining them, but there were many things to consider. They were travelling with other friends, and it might not be convenient for them to have extra people along. Moreover, we had a young baby. Since June was then only about eight months old, leaving was not really a practical solution for us. Actually some of my friends had already warned me that in mainland China there was a great shortage of medical supplies. They cautioned that if the child became ill, even though we might find a doctor, he would not be able to do much without suitable medication. As a result we decided not to go along with Mary and her family on their journey into what was then called Free China. That referred to a western area of the country the Japanese had not yet conquered. In due course, we said our farewells to Mary and her family, and they left us in sole possession of the flat.

The fall of Hong Kong caused a great exodus of refugees from the colony. People were intent on both escaping from the Japanese and finding a place where it was possible to eke out a living. Some of H.H.'s friends wanted him to return with them to their native province of Fujien, on the southeast coast of China. The idea was that he would work on some industrial development. It was only after careful consideration that he finally decided to accompany those friends and take me and the baby with him. The first thing we did was to sort our few possessions and choose what we would take with us. These consisted mainly of the most useful articles of clothing that Mamma's former servant, Miss Leung, had salvaged from the Peak house. I was thankful that I had bought a good stock of Klim milk powder from the hawkers (at exorbitant prices), and I carefully packed it for the journey. We had no suitcases and could not afford to buy them even if we could locate some. However, I was advised by someone to buy some large canvas bags that the local merchants had started to make for the many people returning to their villages in China. They were like a sailor's kitbag, made of strong canvas, cylindrical in shape, and with a series of brass eyelets so that they could be drawn closed, threaded with a brass staple, and padlocked. I bought a couple of these. Within days we were ready to

leave at a moment's notice and were just waiting for our friends to give the signal.

It was then that H.H. told me about a Japanese officer with whom he had become friendly while acting as a translator. The man had come down from Shanghai and seemed to be a decent person. He even asked H.H. to stay at his house in Hong Kong and generally help him. H.H. declined the offer and repeated to me that since he had studied in their country, he had good reasons not to want to work for the Japanese. H.H. was constantly running around undertaking various negotiations for one person or another. Since the buses were not yet running properly, he would either have to take a rickshaw from place to place, which was expensive as the price had gone up very high, or go on foot. He had been an athlete in his younger days, but by that time he was not good at walking. He perspired a good deal, but because the water supply was still restricted he could not have as many cups of tea as he was used to.

Although his general health seemed good, he had told me of several abdominal operations during his younger days, although I did not know the details. The only real hint of his having anything wrong with him at that time came just before we left Idlewild. He had been laid up for a few days. Not being certain of the cause, we assumed he was just exhausted. Everyone was feeling the stress of the occupation, and he soon recovered. Early one Sunday morning in late April, just after we finished breakfast, H.H. told me he felt so tired that he would have to lie down on the canvas cot. He quickly fell asleep. I potted about for a while and later, at about eleven o'clock, was sitting in the living room reading one of H.H.'s industrial chemistry books when I heard him calling me to his bedside. He told me to phone and ask his good friend, Dr Y.T. Liu, to visit him. He said he was not feeling well and had pains in the lower back. I attributed these to rheumatism that was common in Hong Kong because of the humid climate, but when I felt his forehead there was a good deal of cold sweat.

Dr Liu came about two o'clock, prescribed some medicine, and asked if H.H.'s manservant would go with him to fetch it. About six o'clock that evening, H.H. wanted to urinate but was feeling so unwell it hurt him to move. I persuaded him to use our daughter's baby-pot. Because his urine was the colour of strong tea and had an offensive odour, I decided it should immediately be sent to the doctor to be examined. The manservant took it across the harbour to Dr Liu's office, but he had already gone for the day. During the early part of the night,

H.H. suffered a good deal from the pain, but later fell into an exhausted sleep. The medicine probably contained a sedative, and he was still asleep early next morning when the doctor phoned me. I told him about the urine specimen, and he apologised that he was unable to look at it immediately since he was due to conduct a charity clinic at the Tung Wah Hospital. He had to walk all the way there from his home on Sassoon Road, quite far from town, because his car had been commandeered by the Japanese and he had not yet been able to get it back. However, he promised that as soon as the clinic was over he would go to his office and check the specimen.

H.H. was not at all well during the morning. About noon Dr Liu telephoned again to tell me that the specimen had been found to contain kidney cells. He told me that my husband must be taken to hospital, and asked if I wanted him to take care of the case. I said yes and he told me to try to send H.H. to the Hong Kong Sanatorium and Hospital in Happy Valley, on the island side of Victoria Harbour. The cross-harbour vehicular ferries were not yet back in service, so we decided to arrange for the Kwong Wah Hospital in Kowloon to send an ambulance to collect H.H. from the flat and take him to the Star Ferry Pier in Tsim Sha Tsui. He could then cross the harbour and be met on the other side by another ambulance to take him to the Hong Kong Sanatorium. Soon after 2 pm, the stretcher bearers arrived at the flat accompanied by a doctor. But by that time H.H. was already dying. The doctor gave him an injection of camphor in a desperate bid to save him, but it did not work. Soon he was dead.

I was stunned. It had happened so quickly. With the war and the occupation, our lives had not been perfect, but we had had each other and made the most of things. Now it was finished. It was a terrible blow. Somehow I managed to keep my head and make all the necessary arrangements with the help of some relatives and friends. They assisted in many ways, and I was grateful to all of them. One was T.K. Liang, husband of H.H.'s eldest sister, in whose Beijing home we had both lived during 1926. I asked him to help me select a coffin for H.H., and he found a good one at a reasonable cost. Then my own brother-in-law Horace, Grace's husband, negotiated with our landlord so that we could use the ground floor flat for the funeral. Horace also arranged for the framing of an excellent enlarged copy of H.H.'s wedding photo. This likeness of the deceased was essential for the Chinese funeral service and is still kept by our daughter.

Being just ten months old when she lost her father, June did not understand what was happening. For the funeral, the amah dressed her in a blue dress and tied a little piece of white wool into her hair to signify that she was in mourning for a close family member. The amah could see I was sad and busy with H.H.'s affairs, so instead of handing me the baby, she strapped June on her back and carried her as she went about her duties. In other words, the amah would take care of the baby for me at those times—such as feeding or bath times—when it would have been normal for me to look after her.

On the Monday that H.H. died he and his Japanese friend had an appointment to see each other. The day before, I telephoned the man to cancel the appointment, and he asked me to keep him informed of H.H.'s condition. When I later phoned to tell him that H.H. had died, he did not fully understand me and immediately came to our home, thinking H.H. wanted to say something to him. When he found H.H. dead, he simply knelt down silently beside the body and must have said a prayer of some kind in Japanese. My husband had been correct in his opinion of the man. As soon as he knew that I wanted to have H.H. cremated, he immediately set about making all the necessary arrangements with the Japanese crematorium. For the funeral he came wearing full military uniform, including his sword, and led the funeral procession. Many years later I found him again in Japan, and he brought his wife and daughter to see me. I was glad when he told me that he had resigned from military life and was making a living by establishing a factory that made chalk to be used for chalk boards. His product was free of toxins, unlike other brands on the market, and had become a popular seller. I am sorry I have again lost touch with this Japanese friend.

The sudden death of my husband hit me like a thunderbolt. However, I knew that I had to take control of my life and do the best I could under such unexpected circumstances. In typical Chinese style, I told myself that H.H. had two uncompleted duties that I had to try to finish for him. First, he had a responsibility to his mother in Beijing. I would have to try to deputise for him in whatever way I could and also carry out my own duties as a daughter-in-law. It was true that she was being supported well by her elder son Dick, who then lived in Mukden working as the Chinese representative for the British American Tobacco Co. All the same, as a younger son and daughter-in-law, we each had our own

specific duties towards her. Secondly, even without H.H., I still had to raise our daughter June as best I could and educate her to an extent appropriate to her own natural intelligence. No matter how broken-hearted I might be, I could not neglect these two duties and knew that I must try to carry out my late husband's wishes as well as my own, as circumstances might permit.

In later years many people—including my daughter, when she was grown-up and married, and her mother-in-law—often asked me why I had not remarried. There were several reasons. One was that I would have had to divide my attention between a second husband and my child, and I also hoped to continue with my profession. Another reason is that according to Chinese tradition not only was a widow frowned upon if she remarried, but the child she brought to her second marriage was stigmatised and referred to derogatively as an "oil ladle." I confess that I do not quite understand the meaning of this expression, but I know the social stigma is a reality. Of course, I had been steeped in old-fashioned Chinese ethics and morals, which were still prevalent in Hong Kong social circles at the time; to a much lesser degree, such traditional values may still affect people's lives today.

I have never regretted the decision not to marry again and have been satisfied with the freedom and independence I have enjoyed. I know that had I remarried I would not have been able to throw myself into my work or my many volunteer activities as I have throughout the years. Sometimes, though, I have felt guilty that I have not been able to be with my daughter as much as I would have liked. Occasionally, I had to neglect her a little and regret that I was not always able to afford the things and opportunities that a husband might have made possible. Nevertheless, I am proud that I have been able to manage all these years by my own efforts. In truth, I have never felt the need nor the desire to remarry, although I do not in the least condemn others for doing so. I have fully approved of my relatives or friends who have remarried and have even encouraged many a young widow, particularly those living abroad, to do so when a suitable candidate or opportunity came along.

In April 1942, when I suddenly found myself a widow after less than twenty months of marriage, I did not stop to think about remarrying, but I did consider the possibility of going into what was then known as Free China. I still had my doubts about the availability of medical facilities, and there was literally nobody I could depend upon if I went there. However, it seemed out of the question that I should



remain in Hong Kong. My Chinese upbringing also had something to do with the decision. H.H. had died and his family—his parents or his brother—had a moral responsibility to support his widow and child. I knew that my husband's brother, Dick, could well afford to do so. Consequently, I simply wired him to say that his brother had died and that we were coming to Beijing to stay temporarily with my mother-in-law.

I had to consider whether to take our amah along. Hing Jieh would be invaluable to look after my daughter, should I find work as I hoped. However, I wanted her to decide for herself and explained that I had no idea what our circumstances would be like. We might have to eat "one meal of congee and one of rice," as the saying goes. It was up to her to decide what she wanted to do. At the time, I suggested that she go to the temple and ask for guidance. Hing Jieh went to her temple and knelt before the statue of the Goddess of Mercy and prayed devoutly, as she often did when faced with a dilemma. Placing herself in the hands of fate, or perhaps under the influence of the goddess, she then explained her problem while shaking a tall wooden canister containing one hundred numbered slivers of bamboo until one dropped out. According to superstition, this sliver would provide her with an answer. Bowing to thank the goddess for her guidance, she then consulted the priest to provide her with the written oracle corresponding to the number on the bamboo sliver. It was, and still is, customary for these predictions to be printed on little slips of paper also numbered from one to one hundred and often printed with a simple but guiding verse of poetry together with a short prediction or pronouncement. Understandably, these are of a general nature and need to be interpreted. Some temples are famous for the quality of their predictions. When Hing Jieh told the priest her problem, he interpreted her slip of paper to say: "You can go along with this person with perfect confidence and trust." She was relieved and told me the whole story upon her return.

In those days June was fond of being carried around on the amah's back. In fact Lady Margaret had given her a red Chinese carrying strap when she was one month old. Every night the amah would employ this device to help the baby fall asleep. She had even hand-sewn a second strap for her and also made a little Chinese jacket, both with some blue linen remnants that I had. She trimmed the jacket with white. The amah would often potter around with June dozing comfortably on her back, so in this way the baby was given a lot of attention.

## THIRTEEN

# Escape to China

Eager to get to H.H.'s family in China, I enquired about the next sailings to Shanghai, where we would either have to transfer to another ship or go on by train to Beijing, and asked our Japanese friend to try to procure the tickets on my behalf. He found that sailings were few and far between. There was a cargo boat due to leave Hong Kong about two weeks after H.H.'s death, but this boat had been so heavily booked that we could obtain only fourth class tickets. When we eventually boarded the vessel, I found that the accommodation was in the lower hold of the boat where, amongst all the other discomforts, the smell was totally unbearable. Fortunately we were able to exchange tickets with some third class passengers. This meant we were accommodated in the upper hold, which actually was little better than our previous berth but lacked the smell. Everybody slept on the floor, with eight passengers lying on two three-by six-foot Japanese tatami mats. Because of the overcrowding, if anyone wished to turn over during the night he or she would first have to sit up to get into the new position and then lie down again. We could not roll over, but we managed somehow.

The ship did not supply any food suitable for the baby, as everybody was expected to help themselves from large containers of rice and vegetables put out at meal times. Both the amah and I knew it was not appropriate to serve milk to an infant suffering from diarrhoea, which June was at the time. However, we had nothing else to give her except Klim powdered milk, which I watered down and made thinner than normal. To make matters worse, the amah developed severe abdominal pains during the journey and was not able to do any work.

Whenever the weather conditions were suitable, I took June to the upper deck so that we could enjoy some fresh sea air and sunshine. It took us ten days to reach Shanghai, a trip that normally could be completed in a week.

I had informed Eddie of our intended journey, and he invited us to stay a while at his home before continuing to Beijing. As both his legs had been amputated below the knees, he could not come to meet us himself but instead sent his new secretary to meet our boat. I asked her to take June and the amah to a doctor, while I stayed behind to attend to the baggage. The secretary took the baby to the Children's Hospital in Shanghai, where the doctor diagnosed her illness as "just a cold in the abdomen." He prescribed a bottle of medicine and told the amah that when June had finished it she would be all right. My cousin, Lizzie Waller, came to see us at Eddie's house, and she felt that the baby was far from cured of her malady. Lizzie was an experienced mother, having raised six children of her own. She said: "Irene, your baby is quite sick and you should take her to see a good German doctor that I know. He is quite expensive, but even if you have to sell or pawn some of your things, you should still take Junie to see him." I took her advice, and the doctor prescribed some Enterovioform and advised me to feed Junie grated apples. I was to take her stool to show him every day, but he did not need to see the child. I told the doctor I was due to leave for Beijing in a week but he advised against travel, saying it was not enough time for June to recover. I therefore extended our visit to ten days, and he agreed. The doctor was able to stop June's stomach disorder within that time, although by then she had lost a lot of weight.

Although the Cheng family relatives in Shanghai were sympathetic and kind to us, I did not want to be constantly bothering Eddie and his household. I thus set a date for H.H.'s memorial service to be held four weeks after his death and rented a little room in a nearby temple for the ceremony. I went there with June and the amah the day after notifying the relatives, many of whom came to pay their respects to H.H. and to offer us their sympathy. The wife of H.H.'s first cousin Dr Hosien Tseng, who had been visiting her own maternal family in Soochow, came to Shanghai and arranged to travel with us to Beijing on the train, a kindness I much appreciated. That night the weather was terrible, with thunder, lightning, and heavy rain, but we kept to our schedule and the next morning reached Beijing, by which time the weather had cleared. I was of course in mourning until then, but I

changed into a plain dress before leaving the train because my mother-in-law, who was delighted to see her grandchild and me, did not at that time know her son was dead. H.H.'s sister Mary had a manservant who went to Shanghai on a different boat and was also heading for north China. He dutifully brought some of my baggage and H.H.'s ashes by boat from Shanghai to Beijing so that we would have less to take care of on the train.

Most important among my possessions were my husband's ashes. I had collected these from the crematorium in Hong Kong a couple of days after H.H.'s cremation because I wanted to take them back to Beijing, which was where he had grown up. I bought two beautiful Chinese porcelain urns (normally used to hold cooked rice and therefore called "rice urns") and put the ashes in them. I had a wooden box specially made, padded with both straw and a piece of cloth to protect the urns. This box went by boat with the other baggage before we left Shanghai. I had Mary's manservant deliver the ordinary items of baggage to my mother-in-law and then take the box of ashes to H.H.'s aunt, whose advice I sought on where to place the urns. She rented a little cubicle in a temple run by Buddhist nuns to temporarily house the box containing the ashes.

On our first afternoon in Beijing, I telephoned my brother-in-law in Mukden. He was extremely sympathetic but told me definitely not to tell his mother that H.H. had died, because my father-in-law had passed away only a couple of years earlier and the old lady had been quite broken-hearted. It was natural, therefore, that her elder son sought to protect her from further grief for as long as possible. I promised to cooperate but, in my misery, found it doubly difficult to keep the truth from H.H.'s mother.

Soon after our arrival in Beijing, June had her first birthday. I suggested to my mother-in-law that it would be a good opportunity for us to go over to our aunt's house, where the ancestral shrine was, so that June could officially pay her respects to the ancestors. As a result the two old ladies invited a few of our closest relatives to come and join us for lunch. At the shrine in our aunt's home, I noted with interest that instead of having the usual wooden tablets for each ancestor, which was common in many established Chinese families, the Cheng family had instead a clear list of names written in good calligraphy on a sheet of red paper. The ancestors were all listed in order of seniority, with the dates of their

births and deaths. On these days, the members of the family would prepare special foods and offer them to the ancestor concerned. All direct descendants who could be contacted would be notified and invited to join in the ceremony and the meal afterwards. This tradition was similar to our ancestor worship in Hong Kong, except that in Beijing it was a great help for me as a newcomer to the family to have a list provided, a practice we did not follow at Idlewild. The list extended to paternal grandparents, beyond which generation memorial services were discontinued. The ancestors on the maternal side were of course not included, as their rightful place was in the shrines of their own families.

I remember especially three ladies who were among the senior relatives invited to join us on that first occasion when June and I officially paid our respects to the Cheng ancestors. One of these was Wa-gu, a younger daughter of H.H.'s grandfather by a concubine and thus an aunt to all those of our generation and sister-in-law to my mother-in-law. She was a year younger than I, but we all still called her aunt and treated her with special respect. Wa-gu, who was a capable and wise woman, took a special liking to June and me and was most sympathetic towards a young widow with an infant to raise alone. The other two women were Second and Fifth Aunts from the Shen family, both bosom friends of my mother-in-law, and both very intelligent and well-educated in Chinese culture. They were also first cousins of the Cheng family in a special kind of way that typifies the complexity of the Chinese extended family.

The intertwining relationships of the Cheng family had intrigued me since I first came to know the family in Beijing in 1926. It was then that I was able to ask many detailed questions of my sister-in-law, with whom I was staying, about the family's illustrious heritage. Before my wedding I had been told that they were among the many proud descendants of the former Imperial Commissioner Lin Jexu (Lin Tse-hsu), famous for confiscating and destroying British opium way back in 1839. During the late 1930s, I met many of H.H.'s relatives in Hong Kong and at the invitation of his sister Mary attended many of their family gatherings. At these I was introduced to various categories of cousins. However, when I asked them how they were all related, neither Mary nor H.H. could enlighten me. One day out of curiosity I asked one of the older folks, Mr C.C. Liu—who later officiated for the Cheng family at our wedding—and he began drawing the family tree for me, a device I had always found intriguing. Mr Liu explained that

Commissioner Lin had three sons and three daughters. The latter married into the Liu, Shen, and Cheng families, in order of seniority. Subsequently, many of the children and grandchildren of these sisters intermarried, so that without the chart it would have been difficult for me to have a clear picture of the relationships.

I was still puzzled about Uncle C.S. Shen, the former Chinese manager of the British American Tobacco Co of Shanghai, who was well known in the business and industrial communities there. Mary and her brother told me that they simply called him Third Uncle, but I figured that as his surname was Shen, and theirs was Cheng, he ought to have been called Third Cousin Uncle instead. Consequently, I went to Mr Shen himself, and he drew me another simple chart to show his special relationship with the Cheng family. He told me that his mother was originally a Miss Cheng, daughter of the third Miss Lin and therefore a grandchild of the famous Lin. Her parents had seven sons, one of whom was H.H.'s grandfather, but they had only one daughter, so she was quite precious. She later married her first cousin of the Shen family, a son of the second Lin sister, and when she brought her children home to visit her Cheng parents, the servants were told to call the children Young Masters and Young Mistresses without adding the word Cousin as would normally be done. Henceforth, all the younger relatives in the Cheng family also addressed them as if they were the children of a paternal uncle instead of an aunt.

On the Liu side—descendants of the eldest Miss Lin—there was also an intermarriage that directly concerned us, as H.H.'s grandmother was a daughter of the eldest Lin sister. However, in this case they adhered to the traditional practice. Uncle C.C. Liu, his children and grandchildren, and members of the Cheng family thus continue to address each other with the title Biao (Cousin) added to whatever other word that indicates their relationship, be it uncle, aunt, elder sister, younger brother, or so on. This explanation may seem complicated, but when a child has been taught how to call someone by the correct title, he can easily figure out when he grows older exactly how that person is related to him or her. I often feel it my duty to try to explain some of these ideas in Chinese culture as many of the younger generation nowadays do not understand them. I think that we who have been fortunate enough to have absorbed something of the old culture need to take time to explain it in relatively simple terms. In this way, we can understand our roots a little better.

During the earlier part of this century the clans descended from the three Lin sisters were in the habit of arranging a large family reunion once a year, generally in Shanghai. Clan members took great pride in attending these reunions and having a group photograph taken. Cousin Jennie Liu, elder daughter of Uncle C.C. Liu, remembered having attended several such gatherings. While being photographed at one of these, she ran from one end of the large semicircle of people to the other end while the camera was being given its long exposure. In this way she succeeded in being at both ends of the photo.

After we arrived in Beijing, the weather was so good that I took June and the amah out for a walk each day. I bought a simple two-seat rattan pushchair into which the amah would settle first the baby and then her special doll. This was a present from my sister Vic's children and was about the same size as the baby. We would push the bamboo pram from our house to the Temple of the Imperial Ancestors, where there was a large park containing a number of old cypress trees with cement and wood benches around them that provided shade and cool breezes. This was only about a 15-minute walk away from where we lived, and we found it very peaceful to go there for an hour or so each day. One day, on such an excursion, an old man walking past us looked into the pram, with the baby and the big doll inside, and exclaimed, "Hey! One real one and one artificial one!"

In accordance with Chinese etiquette, my mother-in-law sent me around to pay courtesy calls on several of her closest relatives. Before I went to each of them, she carefully explained to me who the particular relatives were and how they were related to our family. She also told me that at each household I would be expected to leave a red packet of *Li Shi* (laissee) for the servants, although I was surprised that I did not have to give anything to the children. The Second and Fifth Aunts of the Shen family were among those whom I visited. Both were sisters of C.S. Shen, who had so clearly explained their relationship to me, and were actually first cousins of my late father-in-law. They were also very supportive of me, especially as they realised how difficult it was to pretend to my mother-in-law that H.H. was still alive somewhere in China. I valued their moral support.

In the evenings, my mother-in-law was in the habit of sending her amah out to buy a strong Chinese rice spirit called White and Dry. Afterwards, she would sit in her easy chair, sip some of the fiery liquor, and reminisce while I listened attentively. She would tell of various events

that happened in the family during such-and-such year of the Chinese Republic. With the help of a few peanuts, peppermint sweets, or similar nibbles, she would gradually finish the whole catty of wine by herself. She told me that her grandfather had taught her how to drink when she was a young child, and on most nights she seemed to take it well. However, one evening she let herself go and pointed to H.H.'s enlarged photo, which was hanging in her living room, and said: "You're no use. You're married, you have a child, but you need other people to support them." I could not bear to have H.H. insulted in this way. So I said to her: "Mother, please don't scold him, he can't help it. Wait until Second Elder Brother (Dick) comes home, and he will explain everything to you." Unfortunately, when Dick arrived he still would not let his mother be told of H.H.'s death. Needless to say, I felt terrible that night, but what could I do?

The Chinese have a saying, "Even when you are drunk, you are 30 per cent sober." And the next morning she must have realised that she had said something she should not have. She asked the servants to buy some delicious little chicken pies as a treat for me, as she would do when she wished to humour me. Naturally, I forgave her because I realised that she was evidently under the influence and honestly did not know that H.H. was unable to shoulder the responsibility for our support. But I still had no idea whether anything specific had triggered her remarks.

Besides the courtesy visits to our relatives, I was glad that my good friend Grace Shuping Kuai, one of my travelling companions in 1926, was back in Beijing, lecturing in English at one of the universities. I met Grace and her friend, Yvonne Lo, a graduate of Yenching University, along with one of her students, Miss Tso, for lunch one day. Miss Tso, an excellent Chinese scholar, also served as Grace's tutor in the mother tongue. For a while, we four met every two weeks. As our friendship developed, Miss Tso became interested in my desire to record the details of my acquaintance with H.H. from the time we first met in Beijing in 1926 until his sudden death in 1942. I wanted to pass on to my daughter a clear account of her father when she grew older. Miss Tso said that if I could give her some notes in English she would gladly translate them into Chinese for me. Four weeks later, at our third fortnightly visit, she produced a 960-character epic in excellent classical Chinese that she had been able to compose from my hurried notes. The poem was crafted four characters to a line, four lines to each



verse, with every fourth line rhyming with the second line of each verse. It was a masterpiece that over the years I have committed to memory. I have even used it as a lullaby when suffering from insomnia. Incidentally, I also use the Song of the Lute or P'i-p'a Hsing for the same purpose, as it is even more musical, more melodic, shorter, and less personal. I have learned to recite these without thinking too much about the contents, having adjusted to my fate as a widow long ago.

Dick and his wife were planning to stay in Beijing, and my mother-in-law informed me that as there were only two bedrooms in the house she could not accommodate us all. June, the amah, and I would have to find other accommodation. The three of us moved out of my mother-in-law's house in time for the servants to clean and tidy up our room before Dick and Mary came home. As luck would have it, while I was in Shanghai I had heard of a Madame Hu, widow of a retired diplomat, who was living in Beijing and who rented out rooms to supplement her own meagre finances. She graciously allowed the three of us to live with her and was even willing to let us eat with her (and my amah with her servants) at a nominal rate for our board and lodging. We all knew that what I paid was by no means adequate, but Madame Hu realised that I would not accept complete charity.

She told me one day that she had just visited an old friend, Madame Kang Tung-bi, second daughter of the late Kang You-wei, who had gained notoriety with his introduction of the short-lived Hundred Day Reforms. I told her that Ms Kang had been a great friend of my Mamma since before I was born and that Mamma had indeed thought highly of her. Immediately after Madame Hu's next visit to Madame Kang, to whom she had paid my humble respects, she said that Madame Kang had been delighted to hear I was in Beijing and invited me to lunch. On that day, we all had a happy time together, and I realised that my hostess and Mamma had indeed been true friends and that the intervening decades had in no way diminished her love for my mother. Soon, Madame Kang took to calling me goddaughter and even earmarked a room in her mansion as mine.

Madame Kang was a well-known artist and took a special liking to Junie, who by this time was a few years old. She gave Junie one of her best paintings, which she personally autographed. Junie is now married with her own family, of course, but to this day, more than fifty years later, that painting hangs in her living room and is much admired by visitors. This kind lady also offered to be Junie's first teacher at a

commencement of education ceremony. I gladly accepted, and the ceremony was duly performed. Madame Kang had a son, Dr J.P. Lo, then living in northern California (who later wrote a biography of his illustrious grandfather), and a daughter, Yvonne, whom I had already met at Grace Kuai's lunches although I had not realised who she was at the time.

Dick and Mary returned to Beijing shortly before the Chung Yang Festival, which falls on the ninth day of the ninth month in the lunar calendar, the time when Chinese people visit their ancestral tombs during the autumn. H.H.'s father was buried in a private cemetery some miles northwest of Beijing, as was a younger sister of theirs who had died shortly before my first visit to Beijing in 1926. Now Dick made arrangements to buy another burial plot in the same cemetery, fairly close to the other two relatives, and had the men there construct a cement vault and cover. He also arranged for a good carpenter to make a strong box of beautiful walnut wood, with a hinged cover and lock, to house his brother's ashes. I greatly appreciated all that he had done, especially as I could not possibly afford it myself. On that Chung Yang Festival day I accompanied Dick and Mary to the cemetery to visit the two graves and to have H.H.'s ashes properly interred. My husband had now been brought home to rest, and I was satisfied. The Chinese have a saying about the dead: "When they are placed in the earth, they are at peace."

Dick and Mary, who were both very fond of June and me, realised that they were faced with a problem. It was not easy for Dick to keep up two establishments, so he asked his mother to move with the three of us into his Mukden home. I naturally consented to whatever he decided and in fact looked forward to seeing Mukden again and to living there for a while. I had briefly visited the city with my two friends in 1926. My mother-in-law at first consented to the move but, when the time came nearer, she simply refused to go. She said that the winters would be too cold in Mukden and that she would rather stay close to her friends and relatives in Beijing with whom she could chat in Fukienese and play k'an, a special card game peculiar to the province. At first Dick let her do as she pleased, but some time later, after the winter was over, he managed to persuade her to join us.

Dick and Mary had a modern two-storey house in Mukden, and we were given a spacious room downstairs near the dining room. The

couple had an adopted daughter, Maisie Chi Mei, whom they treated lovingly as though she were their own. In fact this child fully appreciated their affection, which she was to return in later years. There were two amahs in the household, one of whom spoke Cantonese and the other Mandarin. The latter had been asked to bring along her own daughter to become a playmate for Maisie. There was also another young woman servant about age 20, a hefty manservant, and lastly a male cook.

We arrived when winter was approaching, and soon we experienced the intensity of northeast China's bitter cold. Fortunately, the house was built to withstand such extremes of temperature. It had double windows for insulation, and the whole building was centrally heated. When the weather got colder still, we stayed indoors practically all the time, except for a few minutes before lunch each day when we donned our overcoats and briefly stepped out of doors to inhale a few breaths of the fresh, crisp air. There were constant snowfalls and only the middle of the roadways were cleared. Each succeeding snow storm piled up untouched on either side of the road until spring, when it all gradually melted and disappeared.

Hing Jie had first suffered from abdominal pains when we were aboard the boat from Hong Kong to Shanghai. They did not go away, and soon after we arrived in Beijing I took her to see a gynaecologist. He diagnosed that she had a uterine tumour that should be operated upon. I explained all this to her, but she absolutely refused to have the operation and I did not try to force her. While we were in Mukden the pains returned. After consulting Mary, I again took Hing Jie to see a specialist, who confirmed the previous diagnosis and also recommended an operation. The doctor made it quite clear that there was no other way to treat such tumours but asserted that the operation had been performed hundreds of times and was perfectly safe. After we got home, I tried to explain the situation to Hing Jie fully and clearly, so that she understood that there was no other treatment available and that she should have no fear of an operation. If she had the operation she would be forever relieved of the suffering that she had experienced for many months, especially during her menstrual periods. I knew a good deal about her family circumstances and pointed out that she had nobody who would really suffer if anything unfortunate should happen to her. I even wrote out a will for her in case it was necessary, so that we would know what to do with her possessions. Hing Jie finally agreed to undergo

surgery, and Dick paid all the expenses. I took over full responsibility for looking after Junie, but Mary also assigned the young woman servant to help me whenever I needed her, especially when I went to visit Hing Jie in hospital.

Meanwhile, I showed Dick the Cheng family trees that I had drafted from notes given to me by the two Cousin Uncles while we were all in Hong Kong. He seemed quite interested in them and in turn produced a handwritten copy of the Cheng family records. These had been specially compiled for him by a relative and brought to Mukden from the family's ancestral home in Fuzhou. The records, in fact, dated from the time the Cheng family first settled there. From these records, it seemed that H.H. was of the 33rd generation, so Junie is of the 34th. The documents began with the first ancestor, who had settled in Fukien province, and gave the names of his sons and grandsons and so on, which filled the first page. The next page began with the most senior man on the preceding page and gave the names of his descendants. This method continued until all the descendants through the male lines were recorded. Although I was fascinated by the document and able to figure out its contents, I felt that it would be better if all the names appeared together on a single, combined chart. This was clearly a job that would require a good deal of time and patience.

At the time, there was a cousin, B.J. Wang, living in Dick's home who was the son of my mother-in-law's brother. He worked in Mukden but had been on convalescence leave for some months. He had little else to do and offered to tackle the job of compiling the family tree. We sometimes discussed the details as he pieced the information together. When he finally finished it, he handed me the draft on a huge piece of paper, which I carefully folded and packed away. It was not until many years later that I found someone who could photographically reduce it to a more manageable size. I have since made printed copies for some relatives. This task also provided me with some academic and cultural interest during that winter I spent in Mudken.

As spring approached, Dick finally persuaded his mother to come over to Mukden and stay with her entire family for a couple of months. Time was passing, and I felt I must try to look for work somewhere in north China so as not to be a financial burden to Dick, although he, and especially his wife Mary, continued to be kind and generous. I wrote to people I knew in Beijing, Tientsin, Tsingtao, and Shanghai, asking them to keep their eyes and ears open in case they could find something that

might suit my qualifications. Eventually, I had a letter from my good friend and nominal godfather in Shanghai, Dr W.W. Yen, telling me that St John's University (for which he was a member of the board of trustees) would like me to teach English there. I thought this would be a good move and told Dick and Mary about it. In due course, after Junie had her second birthday in Mukden, we left for Beijing to retrieve some of the baggage we had left behind, fully intending to make for Shanghai. Since my mother-in-law's home had already been closed, our aunt, Wa-gu, invited Junie, me, and our amah to stay with her and her five daughters. The girls, nearly all teenagers, were happy to have Junie living with them even for a short while. But Auntie Wa-gu was not at all happy at the idea of my going to teach English in Shanghai, since the Japanese were still in occupation there.

As it turned out, during a trip to Tientsin where she had many friends Auntie Wa-gu heard that the Kailan Mining Administration needed an additional English-speaking secretary. The mines were originally a Sino-British undertaking, but when the Japanese took over the Chinese management persuaded their new overlords to keep the main correspondence and files in English, so that the Chinese would have no difficulty following the proceedings, while the Japanese could have translations whenever they needed them. All the British staff had been interned with the exception of a Miss Binks, who dealt with the administration's most important files. The general secretary of the firm was Henry Yuan, eleventh son of Yuan Shih-kai, the first president of the Republic of China after Dr Sun Yat-sen resigned his post as provisional president. Henry's secretary, Agnes Lin, looked after all the files that passed through his office. But her health was not good, and in case she had to take sick leave he decided to hire an assistant secretary to help out. When Wa-gu heard about this she immediately returned to Beijing and told me to contact Henry and apply for the job.

I arrived in Tientsin early one Saturday afternoon to be interviewed by Henry at his home. He liked my qualifications and gave me a quick test, dictating the leading article of that day's English-language newspaper and asking me to take it down and then read it back to him, which I did with little difficulty. I frankly admitted to him that I could not write shorthand or touch-type but felt confident that I could cope with the work, so he hired me. I returned to Beijing, picked up June, the amah, and some things, and started work a few days later.

My parents had been friendly with the Liang Yen Ching family in

Tientsin. Eventually the eldest daughter-in-law, also a widow, heard of my predicament and allowed the three of us to stay with her family at a nominal rent. Later the assistant manager at Kailan, a kindly old man, enquired about my salary and was able to have it increased, as he realised that I had a family to support. He also decided that Miss Binks, who lived in a Kailan apartment, should let me move in with her as she had two bedrooms and we could share the other rooms. I was first assigned to work in the records department for a short spell so that I could become familiar with the organisation of the files. The department head, Mr E. Wolff, a German who could speak and read some Chinese, was a good tutor. After a fortnight I was transferred to the chief secretary's office, where Agnes Lin proved to be one of the best colleagues and friends I have had throughout my life, though our paths met and separated many times. The chief manager's Japanese secretary was also a good friend to both Agnes and me, and we all worked happily together.

The following spring, Kailan's management decided that as the mines were at Tangshan and the head office in Tientsin, it would be better to relocate the head office to the mines in case the rail connections were ever interrupted. It proved to be a wise decision. While most of the other staff were reluctant to leave their families behind, I preferred to be in the countryside. It was difficult to find suitable accommodation for the three of us at Tangshan, so I asked Henry if he would allow me to scout around myself. I thought there might be a possibility of finding accommodation at a hospice run by some Catholic sisters for the care of families of miners who had been wounded or killed on duty. The next Saturday I went to Tangshan and spoke to the mines administrator, Wei Tong, at his office. He agreed that the hospice might be a good lead but when I went up there, the institution was closed for the Sisters' prayers and lunch. I waited until the main gate reopened and went in to explain my problem to the Mother Superior, Sister Gabriel, an Irish nun. She was most helpful and showed me the dormitory, with its two bathrooms, that had originally been built for the Chinese women teachers of a school for the hospice children. Since all the children now attended school at another facility run by the Kailan mines, the hospice school and the dormitory were empty. We agreed that this accommodation could easily be converted to suit our needs. I asked that we be given a kitchen and a bathroom and that before we moved in, the dormitory be partitioned to make a bedroom and a living

room. The suggestion was approved and instead of a partition, a solid wall was built and the kitchen and bathroom duly installed.

Henry did not want to go out to the mines, so in his place as chief secretary went K.Y. Char, whose family stayed in Shanghai. As my new boss, K.Y. came to check that my quarters had been satisfactorily converted and told me to let him know if there was anything else I might need. I took him at his word and occasionally even asked him for a small loan to cover the last few days of a month. I would return the money to him as soon as our salaries were paid. I had been advised to convert as much money from my salary as possible each month into commodities because inflation was rampant. At other times, if I was short of cash I would sell half a ton of coal, as our salary was partly paid in coal and I did not consume all of my quota.

Although the head office was moved to the mines area, not all staff were prepared to make it permanent. For instance C.C. Wang, the manager, only visited once in a while. When he did visit and needed secretarial help, I naturally assumed that task as well. Many of the messages between Tientsin and Tangshan had to be sent by wire in secret code, and it was my duty to encrypt and decipher them, sometimes in Chinese, at other times in English. On one occasion there was an urgent letter to be sent to Tientsin, and the regular courier had already left for the railway station. Therefore it was natural that I should volunteer to take the letter on my bicycle and deliver it to him at the station. Madame Hu's daughter had given me her old bicycle to enable me to pedal to and from work each day. We all worked in a friendly, cooperative spirit, and I lived in that rural environment happily for several years.

In front of our little home there was a large strawberry field, but we vowed never to touch the berries, except occasionally when they were plentiful and Mother Gabriel told us we could pick some. However, we were allowed to keep half a dozen hens, which helped supplement our diet with a regular supply of fresh eggs. Meanwhile, Junie was picking up some Mandarin as well as being fairly fluent in Cantonese, the language of our amah Hing Jie. One day a friend told me that Junie's Mandarin was getting to be like mine, which I realised was not a compliment. As a result, I spoke to Mother Gabriel and asked her if she could ask one of her Mandarin-speaking nuns to talk with Junie for an hour or so every weekday. To my delight, she found a charming little nun from Hebei, where Beijing is situated, who was happy to

undertake the assignment. She even went to buy a box of Chinese characters printed on paper squares and soon reported that Junie could identify 50 characters. Not much later the number reached 100, and so her progress continued. When my friends heard about this, they told me I was crazy to make my daughter study so soon. But I explained that I had only asked the nun to converse in Mandarin with Junie, which she assured me the child enjoyed as well as learning the characters. Junie was, in fact, learning without much effort. I even asked the nun to slow down the pace, and when Junie was laid up with bronchitis, I stopped the classes completely for a while. But they both wanted to continue, and I saw little harm in allowing the lessons to go on. Thus Junie continued to become increasingly proficient in the language.

Each summer I took advantage of the rest houses that Kailan provided for its staff. The mine employees could rent rooms at reasonable weekly rates, so I took Junie first to Beitaihe and then another year to Chinwangdao, where we could enjoy the fresh sea breezes and paddle on the beach. Junie was growing rapidly and I realised that she needed the companionship of children her own age. Since babyhood she had normally been in the company of adults. Therefore, I searched for and found some families with children close to the same age and formed a play group of about ten children whom I invited to my home at the hospice once a week. One family of eight, the Li's, had one girl the same age as Junie, another a year younger, and a third girl a few years older. The Li's became Junie's best friends. Even now, every time I have been to Beijing in recent years, the two younger girls and the mother still come to see me. As I write, Junie and her friend are both mathematics teachers in senior high school. I have also visited the eldest daughter in her home in Zhengzhou, where she and her husband are both civil engineers.

Another family, the Ma's, have also been kind and friendly to us ever since we first went to Tangshan. The mother taught the children to call me Third Maternal Aunt. When people asked me exactly how we were related, I would tell them the truth— that I was Third Sister-in-law of the Second Sister-in-law of Mrs Ma's Second Sister-in-law— though in Chinese it is easier to say it the other way around. Mrs Ma's maiden name had been Kwan; her second sister-in-law was from the Liang family, into which my sister-in-law had married, hence the connection. Mrs Ma realised the truth of the Chinese saying that people often become doubly "homesick" during important festivals. For Lunar New



Year and other major Chinese festivals, she would invariably invite all three of us to dine with her family and servants, a gesture that we greatly appreciated. From time to time I still see the two Ma boys and their elder sister, who had been among Junie's older playmates. The girl became dean of studies at a senior high school, and one of the older boys a music teacher in Yunnan province. These three still call me Third Maternal Aunt when they see me; they really are like my own nephews and niece, reaffirming as they do that Chinese people indeed place great value on human relationships.

On the whole, Junie kept in fairly good health, although her tonsils frequently bothered her and she had the occasional bout of bronchitis. Fortunately the Kailan pediatrician, Dr H.I. Chu, always gave me excellent, efficient help. It was not always easy to combine the role of loving and caring mother with that of breadwinner, particularly when my daughter felt in need of special attention. I remember that one morning Junie woke up with the measles. Knowing I was about to leave the house, she said peevishly: "I have no Papa and so Mamma has to go out to work." This hurt me terribly, but I could not possibly desert my duties, as I was the only secretary in the office. The amah had probably tried to explain our situation to Junie on some previous occasion, and the child had kept it in mind and uttered her thoughts through her discomfort.

Life went on at Kailan until 1945, when the Japanese surrendered and their occupation of China finally ended. Soon afterwards the mine bosses decided to move the head office back to Tientsin. The chief administrator, Wei Tong, tried to persuade me to stay on in Tangshan and become his secretary. He told me that if I was willing to stay, he could let me have the use of one of the camp-type houses that everybody admired, which were most suitable for small families. I thought the matter over and agreed to stay on because I liked life there and had no roots in the city of Tientsin, unlike many of the other staff. There was a group of six Russian-designed, camp-style houses, each standing on its own grounds yet quite near its neighbours. In winter they were heated by a furnace fed from the outside, utilising anything that could be burnt and needing little coal. The bathroom was the warmest, then the sitting room, and finally the bedroom. Each unit had a little garden in front for flowers and another at the back for vegetables. We even planted some peanuts, but we did not stay long enough to harvest them. It was at Kailan that we spent some of the

happiest times of our stay in north China.

When the Japanese surrendered, most people in the north hoped that the Nationalists and Communists (who had cooperated to fight the Japanese) would continue to work together to rehabilitate and rebuild the country. Unfortunately this was not to be. We read in the newspapers that my younger brother Robbie -- better known by his Chinese name, Ho Shai-lai -- who was serving in the Nationalist army had been sent to Chinwangdao and Huludao as commander of the two ports. I wrote and asked if Junie and I could visit him, ostensibly to hear his and other family news. Robbie welcomed the opportunity for such a reunion. As he had been allotted a house, he said he could easily accommodate us. When the time came for us to begin our journey, my niece Rosamund Liang (the daughter of H.H.'s sister) was visiting us from Beijing, so she and Hing Jie came along as well.

Robbie took me for my first ride on a Jeep, a truly versatile little vehicle, and during the visit I was able to see some product of the efficient military training he had undergone in England. For each of his trunks, Robbie had a full manifest of its contents, and I often remarked that I wished I could develop some of his organising skills. I also asked Robbie about Father's health, and he replied: "He is stronger than I am." So I decided that since there were still no passages available for civilians on the sea route to Hong Kong, there was no need for me to rush home until the hot summer of 1946 was over. Moreover, as I had found a good job that I could handle quite well, I was not certain that I should throw it aside too easily.

My mother-in-law had returned to live in Beijing, and now that the war was over she of course expected to hear daily from H.H. and her two daughters. We still had not told her of H.H.'s death. Actually her elder daughter, Mrs T.K. Liang, had died in Hong Kong in July 1938 and her younger son-in-law, Tommy Lee, had also died in Chungking of a heart attack. Mother-in-law had not been told about any of these events, so she asked her relatives and friends to listen carefully to the radio. This was the means by which many people from up-country sent messages to their relatives in north China. One day I received a letter from mother-in-law asking if I had any news from H.H. and if not to give her his address so that she could write directly to him. When I received that letter I reasoned with myself that, as she was now living with Dick and he was not working, it was time that she should be told the truth about H.H. so that there would no longer be a terrible

misunderstanding between us.

I wrote her a long letter in Chinese, telling her that my sister Jean had lost her husband and informing her that in Hong Kong every family had suffered heavy losses, some in material ways and others by bereavement. I did not dare send this letter directly to the old lady but instead addressed it to her in care of her son and daughter-in-law. However, before I got round to mailing it, I came to the conclusion that they would probably not show her the letter. Finally I decided that I had better go and tell her personally, which would leave Dick in a better position to console her.

Every year I was in the habit of taking a few days off around New Year to go either to Tientsin or to Beijing to visit relatives and friends and perhaps to do a little shopping. That year, I had originally decided to go only to Tientsin, but I changed my plans and spent the last night in Beijing instead. I arrived in the late afternoon. It had been snowing heavily earlier in the day, and there was snow piled up on the sidewalks. When my train arrived at Beijing, I went straight to where my mother-in-law was staying. I entered the house just as Dick and Mary were about to leave for dinner. I told them I had an appointment elsewhere and so did not need any food. However, we spoke for a short time during which Mary told me, "Second Brother has decided not to tell the old lady about Third Younger Brother." I did not want to contradict her then and there, so I just said, "I'll see."

Then I went into the living room where mother-in-law was sitting. Maisie (the granddaughter) and the amah and her daughter were all there with her. We chatted generally, as I gave them some Hong Kong news and told the old lady that I planned to return to the colony for a visit to see my father after the summer was over. After a while, I decided the time was appropriate to tell her about H.H.'s death, so I told the amah and the two children that I wanted to talk to the old lady alone and asked them to leave the room. They left at once. I was wearing my long black silk gown and was sitting quite close to the old lady. I held her hand and not really knowing how to begin, I said: "Mother, I have something to tell you, but I don't know how to say it." There was a moment of deathly silence. "Never mind, say it," she said. I still did not know how to begin. "I'm afraid you might get angry." She assured me, "No, I won't get angry." "You might be sad," I said, still dodging the issue. "Never mind, you say it," she insisted, seemingly in complete control of the situation. I could not steel myself to begin telling her, so there was

another silence. She finally broke it by saying, "It's about San-Di [H.H.], isn't it?" I could only mumble "Yes," and sat silently, averting my gaze. "He's no more, is that it?" she asked. "Yes," I responded, "He was gone before I came to Beijing, but I brought his ashes home and he is buried near his father." The old lady thought it over for a little while and showed no signs of breaking down. "He's gone, and it's Heaven's will and cannot be helped," I said. "But you must take good care of your health and watch Jia Yu [Junie] growing up. She's your own flesh and blood."

My reference to Junie changed the subject and allowed us to skirt the sensitive topic of H.H.'s death. I could see that she was very fond of her grandchild, so we talked about Junie. From an early age I had taught her to send simple letters to her grandmother for her birthday, Lunar New Year, and other auspicious occasions. Mother-in-law then told me proudly that she had kept all of these letters. "She's a bright child, a credit to your Cheng family. I hope you will take good care of yourself so that you can see her grow up," I told her. I also asked her to do me a special favour. I made her promise to keep her sorrow under control and not to show it unduly; if she did not, Dick would never forgive me for having told her the truth. I asked her to accept Heaven's decree in a matter that could not now be helped. She was very understanding and gained my absolute respect at that meeting. She never did show her grief in public.

As soon as I had finished my mission, I called the others back into the room again. I told the amah that I had informed my mother-in-law about her Third Son and asked her to watch over the old lady and to tell her master and mistress when they returned. After that I called a rickshaw to take me to our aunt's house, then I went to the home of the Second and Fifth Aunts of the Shen family who lived together and asked each of them to try to cheer the old lady up during the next several days. Finally, I went to the home of Madame Kang Tung Bih, my godmother, to stay in "my room" and unwind for the night. The following day I returned to Tangshan. Having told the old lady the truth and not having to live with the lie any more, I felt that a heavy weight had been lifted from my heart.

I decided to play my trip to Hong Kong by ear. However, I felt there were two things I should attend to before I left north China, even if it was only for a visit of uncertain length. First, I felt I should complete the arrangements for H.H.'s tomb, which Dick had already helped me with before going to Mukden. I wrote to the people managing the

cemetery where H.H. was buried and asked them to make a granite tombstone, with Junie's name as the person who set it up. In Chinese tradition it is customary for the son to do it but, as we had no son, I felt it appropriate to use my daughter's name instead. I paid for the tombstone and on my subsequent trip to Beijing visited the cemetery to confirm that it had been properly set. Second, I knew I should take Junie to Beijing to say goodbye to my mother-in-law and other senior relatives, since I had no idea when I would be returning. The old lady was quite sensible about my leaving. In fact, when I had seen her on my previous visit, she had even suggested that since Father was getting on in years I should visit him as soon as possible. "I haven't anything valuable to give you," the old lady said. "However, I would like you to have two of the red lacquer trunks that were part of my dowry, if you don't mind their being very old and not in perfect condition." I was delighted with her offer and thanked her sincerely. I value old things and the red lacquer furniture produced in Fukien province has long been famous for its durability and serviceability. In addition to the two trunks, my mother-in-law also gave me an heirloom Chinese musk ring, which is generally worn by men on the thumb. The ring has a special fragrance and now belongs to my daughter.

Before I left for Hong Kong, I told Wei Tong, my boss at the mine, about my travel plans. He agreed to give me as much leave as I wanted and arranged for his own second daughter to stand in for me as his secretary. I left Tangshan just as the summer of 1946 turned to autumn. We sailed from the port of Chinwangdao for Shanghai and again stayed with Eddie and his family in Father's house for ten days while waiting for another boat to take us farther south on the second half of our journey. While in Shanghai I took Junie to see a few senior relatives of the Cheng family who had helped us on our way north in 1942. These relatives included Uncles C.S. Shen and C.C. Liu and their families.

Just as we were about to board our coastal steamer, I saw a large notice on the wharf stating that the boat would be calling at the port of Fuzhou. I thought this would be an excellent opportunity for me to take my daughter to visit the ancestral home of the Cheng family, which I knew was in that city. However, I could not recall the name of the street on which it stood, although I had been told it many times by elder relatives. Therefore I got Junie, the amah, and our baggage safely aboard and then disembarked to phone Uncle Shen. He immediately gave me the name I had forgotten, Kung Hsiang (Palace Lane). As a result, when

the ship reached Fuzhou, I was able to take Junie by rickshaw to the street that contained just four large mansions belonging to the Lin, Liu, Shen, and Cheng families. The three sons-in-law of the famous Imperial Commissioner Lin Tse-hsu had evidently each acquired a house in that famous lane, or they might have had all four mansions built. The Cheng mansion was at the farthest end of the lane. When we found it, Junie and I entered the compound. Facing the main entrance was a wall with a wooden framework in front that included rows and rows of shelves carrying the ancestral tablets of many generations of Cheng ancestors. Each generation was placed on a single level. I tried to explain what we saw in simple terms to Junie, who was then only four years old. We made our bows respectfully and went farther into the compound. I was told that the family had rented the outer section behind the wall to a small textile workshop, whose workers were busy operating the looms and machinery. We walked along the side wall and came to the living quarters at the rear of the compound, which were occupied by members of the Cheng family. We chatted for a while, then Junie and I returned to the boat by rickshaw. I was glad to have been able to take Junie to visit her family's ancestral home, especially as neither her father nor any of his siblings had ever had the opportunity to do so.

When we arrived in Hong Kong, I could see some of the destruction caused during the war years. Parts of Hong Kong Island and Kowloon, especially Wan Chai and North Point, had been badly bombed. Large numbers of refugees were beginning to pour in from the mainland as the civil war between the Nationalists and Communists became more and more intense. Many of the refugees were industrialists from Shanghai and its neighbouring provinces. They often brought along their workmen and machinery to restart their operations in the territory. Some of them settled in the North Point area of Hong Kong Island and built new textile and other factories in several districts of Kowloon and on the western side of the New Territories, thus helping to bring about Hong Kong's rapid industrial development. In some cases the destruction caused by World War II provided the industrialists with sites upon which they could build new, modern factories and workshops.

Meanwhile, other buildings that had not been destroyed or had been only partially damaged were repaired and renovated for use as tenement buildings, small private schools, little workshops, and so forth. Some buildings still lacked modern sanitation—hence the problem of

"night soil" was still dealt with by the new use of "dry pans," which would be cleared every night by men or women who sold the contents to gardeners or farmers. Later, when I entered the Education Department, I had an excellent opportunity to learn how this actually worked because some of the schools that I supervised still used the dry pan system.

Conditions at home were now considerably different from what they had been before World War II. Father and Lady Margaret had celebrated their double 80th birthday and diamond wedding anniversary on December 2, 1941. A few days later Father had gone to Macau for a rest. Since the battle of Hong Kong commenced on December 8 (December 7 in America), he found himself ensconced in the Portuguese enclave and did not return to the territory until the Japanese had gone and it was once again a British colony. After we had departed from Idlewild for Kowloon in early 1942, Lady Margaret had stayed on at the house with her staff. I later learned that she had actually taken a trip to Macau late in 1943 and had stayed with Father for two or three months, after which she returned to Idlewild. There on February 7, 1944, with the Japanese still in occupation of the colony, Lady Margaret quietly passed away. Although it took time for the mail to get through, I heard about her passing by way of a letter from Eddie in Shanghai. I sent Father my condolences and even felt I should inform some of his friends in north China whose addresses I knew. I asked a colleague, who was also a good Chinese scholar, to draft a letter in lieu of an obituary notice, and I sent copies of this to some of these friends.

When Lady Margaret passed away, according to Chinese beliefs she did not die at an appropriate time. Father was away and could not return to be at her bedside. Although she was nominally the mother of four sons and eight daughters, many of them were not in a position to attend her passing properly. Her eldest son Ho Wing, who had been adopted from Uncle Ho Fook's family, was in prison when she died. The Japanese had found reason to lock him away, mainly because he was comprador of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank. Permission was sought and obtained from the Japanese authorities to let Brother Wing return home because his mother was critically ill. They allowed him half an hour. When he knelt beside Lady Margaret's bed he asked her to forgive the brevity of his visit, saying, "Mother, I am unfilial and am truly sorry that I cannot be by your bedside for long." The household had prepared some nourishing soup, thinking he might be allowed to

consume it or take it with him, but permission was refused. At the end of the half-hour he was escorted out of the room and returned to prison.

Of the other sons, Henry had died in infancy, Eddie was in Shanghai, and Robbie was at the front (his wife Hesta was also in the interior of China), so there were no sons at Lady Margaret's side when she finally passed away. However, Brother Wing's wife Kitty, many of their children, and a few great-grandchildren were there for the funeral. Robbie often regretted that Lady Margaret did not live long enough for him to repay her in filial service. She had evidently done a good deal for him with her love, understanding, and encouragement. When he received his inheritance from Father, on behalf of his children and himself he built the Tung Ying Mansion on Nathan Road in memory of Father and Lady Margaret, whose Chinese given name was Sau Ying. In the obituary notice I wrote for Lady Margaret, I mentioned that three daughters were at her bedside: Vic, Mary, and Florence. Eva was in China serving with the Chinese Red Cross, where she rendered excellent service.

In his book about the University of Hong Kong entitled *The First Fifty Years*, the Vice-Chancellor, Sir Lindsay Ride, mentions that "another of the earliest of our graduates to join [the Chinese Red Cross Medical Relief Corps] was Dr Eva Ho Tung, who commanded a unit in the field for some years before returning to serve during the hostilities in Hong Kong." In my recent travels to China, I occasionally came across people who had known Eva or Robbie during the war and who spoke highly of their work. For example, there was a couple in Hangzhou who were grateful to Eva for delivering their daughter when the woman went into labour. No doubt Eva did a good job, since obstetrics and gynaecology were her medical specialities. She also had many amusing experiences, despite the difficult times. Sometimes she ran into problems because she liked to wear long pants and have her hair cropped short. On one occasion she went into the ladies' rest room thus attired and was given a hard time by the other women who insisted that she was in the wrong place and tried to force her to leave. They thought she was a man.

Although Lady Margaret had administered the Chiu Yuen Cemetery that Father and Uncle Ho Fook had obtained from the Hong Kong government for use by the Eurasian community, during her later years she decided that she did not want to be buried there. Instead, she wanted to be interred at the Colonial Cemetery in Happy Valley. She



was under the false impression that a person had to be a baptised Christian before being buried there. Therefore, she asked the Rev George She to baptise her on her deathbed. He was an ordained Christian minister who had been one of Father's secretaries and who was also a Eurasian distantly related to us by marriage. She hoped and expected that Father would eventually wish to be buried beside her, so she gave instructions for a suitable burial site to be selected for both of them.

Lady Margaret's personal servant, Au Sing-cheung, who had served her faithfully since she was a little girl, died only a few months after her. Our sister Mary, whom Lady Margaret had brought up since she was about eight, arranged to have the servant buried near the foot of Lady Margaret's grave. Appropriate tombstones in marble were later erected to mark the graves of all three. Many of us regularly visit the graves and take flowers there, though Father had also left some funds for the Colonial Cemetery to continually look after the gravesites. Even since I moved my home to San Diego, I have still managed to visit all my ancestral gravesites whenever I return to Hong Kong.

Looking back I realise that the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong was a true turning point in the lives of my family and the whole Eurasian community. In some ways it no doubt brought us closer together, as we helped each other through the hardships caused by the war. However, it ultimately caused us to scatter and heralded the end of a gracious lifestyle that had its roots in the very social foundation of Hong Kong. In the early days, when we were still shocked by the Japanese aggression, many of my relatives tended to congregate at the home of some senior elder or leading member of the Eurasian community. I have already described how without prior planning H.H. and I, along with Florence and Mrs Archer, brought our children, Eddie's children, and my good friend Dr Chang Siao-mei's daughter and son, Maejeane and Richard, as refugees to Idliewild. Similarly, a couple of dozen people congregated at my Fifth Uncle and Aunt Ho Kom Tong's mansion, Kom Tong Hall, in Lower Castle Road. Likewise, many members and relatives of the Lo family congregated at the homes of Vic, M.K., and their parents-in-law, whose house was just below them, eating and living together in a communal way. Thus my sister Grace and her husband Horace, who was a younger brother of M.K. and whose home had been in Kowloon, were also living at Vic's home during the battle for Hong Kong.

Sometime after the fighting was over, when the cross-harbour ferries had resumed and Florence could contact her husband Dr K.C.

Yeo, she brought their three young children, Richard, Daphne, and Wendy, to rejoin him. They had a difficult time during the years that Hong Kong was occupied. K.C.'s job was with the Hong Kong Medical and Health Department, and his boss, Dr (later Sir) Selwyn Selwyn-Clarke, had told him to stay on working. Of course, K.C. realised that it was his duty to continue to look after the health needs of the people of Hong Kong as best he could, despite the trying circumstances. This led to his falling under the scrutiny of the Japanese and for some time he, too, was imprisoned. However, he was eventually released and continued to carry out his job with his usual dedication, albeit under the most trying conditions. After the war he remained with the Health Department and even managed to have some months of leave in Australia. Later, he rose to head the department, becoming the first Chinese person promoted to the top post in a major government department. When he retired, K.C. was honoured by the Queen with the Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George award.

During the battle for Hong Kong, Jean—who had been working as a secretary at The University of Hong Kong Medical Faculty—became administrator of the Emergency Hospital, which was set up in the Great Hall. After the colony surrendered the university faculty and staff went to Stanley camp, and Jean decided to join them. Her husband Billy, an engineer who had enlisted and had been in control of the lighthouse at Lyemun Pass, was at first interned at Shamshuipo camp in Kowloon. He was later transferred to Japan, where he died of cholera. Jean did not hear of his death until after she had been relocated in Australia, where their children, Elizabeth and John, had been sent at the outbreak of the war. Jean found a suitable job at the University of Melbourne, at which she excelled and gradually became fully adjusted to living in the southern hemisphere.

My friend Dr S.M. Chang and her husband C.C. sent a letter to Father in Macau to obtain his permission to take their two children, Maejeane and Richard, to join them in Chungking. They then asked some friends who were going inland to bring them from Hong Kong. Their English governess, Mrs E. Archer, went to Stanley camp where the rest of the British community was interned. Eddie and his children had of course returned to Shanghai, where I visited them on our way both to and from north China. In later years he told me that he had a difficult time, not knowing how long the war would last or what the outcome would be. He said that in order to let his children have sufficient

calcium, he ground up egg shells and added it to their cereal, as he felt it was too expensive to buy the calcium tablets from a pharmacy. In similar ways, he felt it a challenge to raise a family of four adolescent children during those trying and uncertain times.

During the occupation Horace and Grace had planned to go to the mainland, or Free China as it was then called. They planned to take their daughter Shirley there instead of remaining in Hong Kong, where they felt conditions would be extremely difficult. When Vic and M.K. heard of their plans, they asked Grace and Horace to take their three daughters, Phoebe, Vera, and Rita, along with them. Although Grace and Horace realised that it was a heavy responsibility, especially as there was no knowing how long the war would last or what the outcome would be, they agreed to do the best they could. Grace and Horace had sold everything: jewellery, stocks, bonds, in fact anything they could dispose of. Vic also sold a sufficient quantity of jewellery to match whatever the younger couple had raised. As there were three members of each family, they felt this was the fairest arrangement. They took along Grace's two amahs to help with household chores for the six of them, and the amahs were glad to have the opportunity to accompany them.

Conditions inland were austere and sometimes dangerous. Frequently they would be fleeing just ahead of the approaching Japanese army. Of course I did not hear about these details until after the war—not only from them, but also from other relatives and friends who knew their situation. If the young girls had remained in Hong Kong, there would have been the constant fear of them being assaulted by the often ill-disciplined Japanese troops. Even when the Japanese were briefly ensconced at Idlewild, they had their eyes on a couple of attractive young servant girls, so Lady Margaret had the girls sleep on mattresses near her bed in the basement. In the Chinese interior, for part of their time Grace, Horace, Shirley, and Vic's girls were living with or near one relative or another. Many, including Robbie and Horace, took to planting their own vegetables, especially tomatoes. I heard about the girls helping to carry manure for their vegetables, as all Chinese gardeners do.

I regret that I do not know the full details of what happened to all the relatives and friends who went into Free China, although I have occasionally heard some interesting stories, both good and bad, about those difficult days of wartime on the mainland. What was terribly important about our migrations into China was their effect upon the

development of the children. The decision to send them north was in fact influenced by the lack of suitable education for students in Hong Kong. In mainland China, they could at least enroll in good schools and continue their education to the best of their ability, as circumstances permitted.

For example, after a while Phoebe finished her secondary schooling and had to move to some other town for her college work. The two younger girls wanted to leave with her. Naturally, Grace and Horace had to let them do so. Consequently, they more or less lost touch with the girls after they moved away. As soon as the war was over M.K., who had some excellent connections, was able to find the whereabouts of his daughters and arranged to have them flown home. Naturally, after all those war years they had grown in every way, but they also exhibited signs of deprivation, as was inevitable and only to be expected. I, for one, think them exceedingly fortunate to have had an uncle and aunt willing to shoulder the heavy burden and responsibility of venturing into the unknown, enabling them not only to continue their education but also to gain a firsthand insight into conditions then prevailing in mainland China, which they might not otherwise have been able to do. There is a Chinese saying that can be freely translated as follows: "In all circumstances, we cannot always satisfy everyone; all we can ask for is that our conscience is clear."

## FOURTEEN

# Home Again

**A**fter the war Grace and Horace went home to Hong Kong. Shirley had gone to an English school in Darjeeling, north India. Horace was appointed a magistrate of the Kowloon District Court. I remember one day soon after Junie, our amah, and I returned to the territory from north China in September 1946, Horace advised me to have my driver's licence renewed. He knew the regulations and explained that as the government intended to introduce stricter driving tests, I should renew my licence every year; this was good advice that I readily accepted. When I took Junie to visit Horace at Chinese New Year, he gave her a red laisee (lucky money) packet containing a brand new \$10 note. As neither Junie nor I had ever received such generous laisee, I was grateful for his thoughtfulness and understanding. Ten dollars was then a good deal of money, especially as I was unemployed and finances were tight. Horace was a generous man who was fond of his bridge games, whereas Grace was not at all interested in cards. So Horace often went out for long sessions with his cronies, while Grace just stayed at home waiting for him.

After spending some time at Darjeeling, Shirley went to England to continue her education and for some years was at Dartington Hall, Devonshire—a good progressive school that I had visited and liked. Then she went to London to study dentistry. For a while Grace joined her in London, where she took a Froebel Training Course. Unfortunately, Horace developed a kidney disease and, because he needed constant dialysis treatment, was forced to retire from work. Grace returned from England and nursed him through this illness for many years. Eventually, Horace died at a relatively young age.

After Horace's death, Grace went to teach in the primary classes of Diocesan Girls' School, where she lived with the boarders and shared the residential staff's duties. Finally, she decided to go back to England to teach there while Shirley continued her dental training. Again, Grace stayed with Shirley and took a course on teaching maladjusted children at the Institute of Education. One of her classmates at the institute was John Gittins, a professional man whom she eventually married. Shortly afterwards, Shirley also married a classmate, Tony Payne, a dentist. The four of them lived happily near each other for 25 years.

Before leaving Tangshan, I had written to Father and asked if we could stay at Idlewild. I told him I had not yet decided whether to give up the Kailan Mining Administration job in north China. I felt that I had taken a good deal of training for work in education and should try, if possible, to re-enter that profession. Moreover, I was happy to be home among my own relatives, especially Father and my sisters. Further, in Hong Kong I had many friends, especially former classmates and fellow students from The University of Hong Kong.

Vic learned that the True Light Primary School and Kindergarten had been set up in Caine Road, within easy walking distance from Idlewild. As Miss (later Dr) Ho Chung Chung, who happened to be one of my best and favourite students at Lingnan University, was its head, Vic wisely asked her to reserve a place in the kindergarten for Junie. Miss Ho, using a Chinese version of an American intelligence test, told me that Junie could go straight into the upper section of her kindergarten. She assured me that the child could easily skip the lower section of the two-year course. This pleased me greatly and helped reaffirm my belief that her intelligence, combined with the careful tutoring of the Chinese Catholic nun, had enabled Junie to do so.

After only a couple of months at True Light Kindergarten, Junie again suffered a bout of bronchitis. When her condition persisted, I asked Vic if we could stay with her for a while, as she had already brought up her own children and was quite knowledgeable about medical and health matters, whereas my own confidence as a mother was shaken. Vic agreed, so we stayed with her a while. I took Junie to see my good friend Dr S.P. Li, who told me that Junie's tonsils should be excised. "But we were told that tonsils have a special function and should not be removed," I said. "Well, Irene, in certain cases the operation is necessary, and this is one of them," he replied. Consequently, I took his advice and booked an inexpensive room in the old wing of the Yeung

Wor Hospital in Happy Valley, where I could stay with Junie and help with her care. Dr Li waived his fees for me, so I had to pay only the hospital expenses and other incidentals. Needless to say, I was truly grateful for all this.

After Junie's hospitalisation, Vic again allowed us to stay with her so that the child could complete her convalescence. But although Vic took excellent care of us, unfortunately Junie came down with something again, this time with the mumps. As none of Vic's own children had yet had that highly infectious disease, I realised that this time I must move out. S.P. allowed us to return to his hospital for a few days, then we went back to Idlewild. Fortunately, Junie's health progressed steadily from that time on, and I found that I had quickly learned to stand on my own two feet.

Meanwhile, since the spring school term was about half gone, I decided that instead of sending Junie back to kindergarten for the remaining couple of months, it would be better for her to stay at home. Miss Leung, Mamma's former companion, was staying at Idlewild and offered to tutor Junie for a couple of hours every day free of charge, so I accepted her kind offer. We first used the kindergarten booklets and then the two first-grade readers, which Junie soon finished. After the summer holidays, Junie sat the entrance examination for True Light's first grade. Miss Ho gave all the candidates another intelligence test, after which she said to me: "I have carefully tested Chia Yu [Junie] and find that she should enter the second grade, not the first grade." I said, "Are you sure? I don't want to rush her, you know." She confirmed her assessment, so Junie gained a year in her education by skipping first grade.

At that time, political conditions in north China were becoming more and more difficult. Most of my friends in Hong Kong and my sisters advised me not to return to my job at the mines but to stay in the colony and try to get into the educational field, for which I had been trained. It was a hard decision, but I finally decided to stay on in Hong Kong, especially after Junie had another of her frequent attacks of bronchitis. The winters in Hong Kong, of course, would be much milder than those in the north. I wrote to Mr T. Wai, my boss at the Kailan Mining Administration, explaining my situation and submitted my resignation. H.H. had a distant cousin who also worked in Tangshan, so I was able to ask him to send a few of my things home to Hong Kong by cargo boat and to dispose of the rest. The furniture, of course, belonged

to the firm. Mr Wei's daughter, who had been serving as my substitute, could just take over my post. My mother-in-law and other relatives also understood my circumstances, but I did not realise then that I would be away from north China until 1972, some 26 years later. I was quite worried about Junie's illness, so I again asked Vic if I could bring my daughter to stay with her for a while, since Vic was experienced in looking after sick children. She and M.K. both welcomed the idea so Junie, our amah Hing Jie, and I all went up to stay with the Lo's.

At the same time, armed with a revised curriculum vitae, I began to look for a job. First, I asked for an appointment with the director of education, Mr T.E. Rowell. He read my resume and said: "You have good qualifications, but unfortunately at present I have no job for you. If you could wait until after the budget debate next March, I should by then have been granted permission to add the position of Woman Inspector of Vernacular Schools. I would be glad to appoint you to that post."

Mr Rowell asked me if I was interested in an inspector's job, and I replied: "Yes, very much so." I explained that around 1935 I actually had some specialised training in that work in England. Furthermore, I had viewed many excellent schools in Britain and America during my student days. I had also visited schools in Germany, Switzerland, Japan, and China during the months before and after joining the Lingnan University faculty in 1930-32. Unfortunately, Mr Rowell's request for the new post was not approved, and he asked me to wait another year.

Waiting was by no means easy, because although I had resolved my daughter's and my main board and lodging problems by living at Idlewild, I really needed to have my own job. Of course, I had to pay for all our supplementary expenses, including Junie's education, clothing, medicines, vitamins and other health needs, transport, and our amah's wages. I had a little money left over from an earlier account that I had maintained at Father's office since my childhood days. When that was not enough, I would ask him for an interest-free loan, which I gradually paid off. My amah, by contrast, was able to save up practically all her wages. Occasionally, when she realised I was "feeling a little tight," she would offer to give me an interest-free loan, which was sometimes accepted in the spirit in which it was given.

I mention these trivial details because many people thought that we grew up with a silver or even golden spoon in our mouths. Even some of my sisters, to whom I did not tell too many details, often tried to



persuade me to move out and rent other accommodation elsewhere. I did not take their advice, partly because I was of considerable help to Father. In fact, without boasting, I felt he needed me near him. I also felt it sensible to live carefully and economically at that time because I knew I would eventually have to save for my old age. I remained unemployed for another year, until May 1948, when I finally joined the Education Department.

Naturally, I wanted to keep up my professional interests in various ways. For instance, I would frequently drop in to visit Miss C.C. Ho at the True Light School, which was within easy walking distance from Idlewild. She was a knowledgeable person to whom I could relate, especially about educational matters. In fact, during the next 20 years, we had frequent, often lively discussions on a wide variety of topics concerning teaching and learning. Occasionally I would ask her to refer me to a good classroom teacher whom I could observe at work. Her staff also accepted me as a sympathetic and understanding colleague in the profession, because I went there to admire and not to criticise.

When Mamma wrote her will in 1937, she appointed me, my brother Robbie, brother-in-law M.K. Lo, Prof Hsu Ti-san of the University of Hong Kong, and some of her religious friends to form a board of trustees charged with looking after her temple, the Tung Lin Kok Yuen, and the Po Kok School on her behalf. Over the years, all of us have tried to do our best with regard to what was entrusted to us. After my return from north China, while I was waiting for a job, I frequently visited the Po Kok School and the Tung Lin Kok Yuen Buddhist Temple. At that time Po Kok was still a private primary school, and it was difficult to attract and keep good teachers; those who were there, however, were all dedicated to their task. In those years the temple superintendent, Miss Lam Ling-chun, was also the school principal. She encouraged me to visit frequently and give her any suggestions to help the school develop in various ways. Over the years I did what I could to help the school professionally, while it was mainly my sister, Lady Lo, who did an excellent job in raising funds for the two institutions, thus putting them on a sound financial footing.

Some years later, when the Tung Lin Kok Yuen had plans drawn up to build a secondary school on an adjacent site, I borrowed a copy of the plans intending to study them more carefully. I had been out that whole day to inspect some of the schools in the Wan Chai District, for

which I was the inspector-in-charge. I suddenly felt inspired to drop in on the head office, which then was situated near the Lee Theatre not far from the Tung Lin Kok Yuen, to have a short chat with some senior colleagues there. I visited the office of the Deputy Director, Mr L.G. Ferguson, who was a kind and friendly individual. I said to him: "Would you like to have a look at the plans for a new secondary school?" He gladly agreed and together we enjoyed ourselves looking at the plans, which had been carefully prepared.

"Fergi" then asked me: "Who's going to pay for it?" As the school was then only a private establishment, I jokingly said: "Borrow, beg, but not steal." He carefully explained to me that if the board would be willing to turn the school from a private entity into a subsidised school, the government would help with half the cost of the building and equipment (later this rule was even increased to 80 per cent, though we were too early to benefit from it). Moreover, ever afterwards the government would provide annual subsidies for teachers' salaries and other expenses.

The advantages of becoming a subsidised school were so many that I was immediately convinced. But to play it safe I asked him whether it was true that the government might impose various restrictions so that the school would lose much of its freedom. Mr Ferguson strongly denied this, and I promised to think it over carefully and to mention it to my fellow Directors and then let the Board decide. When I returned to my office, I also discussed the matter with one or two of my senior Chinese colleagues. They all urged me to advise my Board to apply for the change. In those days, the late Mr Wong Hok-Yan was still our Chairman. He too was convinced, and in his considerate and thorough way he saw the matter through.

One of my cousins I greatly admired, Dr Man Wong (who had excellent qualifications and was exceedingly kind and understanding), had his practice in town. I went to him whenever I needed some medical attention, even before I joined the government service. His wife Alice, also a qualified doctor, used to help him in the office by taking care of his patients as a volunteer receptionist and making them feel welcome and at home in the clinic. One day she said to me: "Irene, you have made a special study of education, and there is a good new school that has just started. J.M. and I are both on the Board of Trustees, and we want you to come along to see this school." J.M. Tan, a chartered accountant, was the husband of my cousin Rosie, Man Wong's sister, and

I also had an extremely high opinion of him. So one day I went along with Alice and J.M. to visit the Pei Chiao Middle School.

I was quite impressed because the teachers there seemed dedicated and were really able to help their students. As I was then unemployed, they managed to persuade me to join their Board. They had decided to use November 12, the birthday of Dr Sun Yat-Sen, as their Founder's Day. On the day before this celebration Alice and I were up at the school to check that everything was ready. It had been raining for several days, and as the corridors were paved with little white and coloured ceramic tiles, they looked quite dirty. The staff and students had been busy putting up exhibitions of their work, and everything looked good except the floors, especially the corridors. I remarked on this to one of the teachers. She replied that the janitors had worked so hard for several days that they did not have the heart to ask them to clean the floor as well. I thought about this for a moment, then asked: "How about the students?" The teacher replied: "We dare not ask the students to do such a menial job as cleaning the floors."

I asked for a meeting with the Students' Association Committee and told them: "You've all worked hard and have put up many good exhibits to show your parents and guests tomorrow. However, the floors are so dirty that it would be a disgrace to you all. If the school provides the materials and the equipment, do you think you could find some students to do the cleaning?" They immediately set about to do the work, and the teachers were impressed that Hong Kong students were willing to undertake such a job. It was clear that the students were proud of their school and wanted it to look its best.

On Founders Day the school had a photograph taken of its Board of Trustees. One day later I remembered to advise the school authorities that they should go to Nanjing and have the school registered, both with the Ministry of Education and the Commission for Overseas Affairs, because I knew from my thesis research and my service at the Ministry that all schools, including overseas Chinese schools, are expected to do this. The Pei Chiao School duly took my advice. When the school's representative was doing this at the ministry, the Deputy Minister asked who was Chairman of the Board. They replied that they had been unable to persuade anyone to serve as such. The official, Dr Han Lih Wu, who was a personal friend of mine, looked at the photograph of the board, recognised me, and advised the applicant to ask me to become chairman. I tried to decline, but was finally persuaded to accept.

In due course, with my own special interest in all things educational, I soon found myself on the boards of four well-known schools: the Pei Chiao Middle School, the Po Kok School, and two other schools I shall not name here. However, when I joined the Education Department, my colleague, Mr K.H. Yuen, who was most helpful to me in many ways, advised me that as an officer in the department, I was not allowed to be on the board of any private school. I therefore wrote to the government to explain that I had been invited to serve on the boards of three schools from which I would immediately resign. However, in the case of the Po Kok School my mother had especially selected me to serve on that Board in her Will, and I regarded it as a sacred trust from which I could not resign. I am grateful that the Government saw the sincerity of my request and allowed me to remain.

The Hong Kong Teachers Association held its summer conference at St Stephen's College, Stanley, during the summer of 1947, and they invited me to deliver a lecture. I chose as my subject the topic of "Problem Children," which I knew would be of interest to each of them due to their own classroom experiences. I based my remarks on what I had learned over the years from Dr Cyril Burt's book *The Young Delinquent*, from the short courses I had attended in London on topics such as difficult and delinquent children, and from other courses organised by the New Education Fellowship or the Tavistock Clinic. At the end of my lecture, I invited questions, tried to answer them, and finally offered the audience my own question. As there was no organisation in Hong Kong at the time dealing with such matters, I asked if they would be willing to join and pay, say, five dollars each to cover expenses if we were able to establish one. I asked for a show of hands and at least one hundred shot up. This gave me hope and encouragement, but still the time was not yet ripe to start on a venture that eventually developed into the Mental Health Association of Hong Kong.

When we first reached Hong Kong from China, even though I did not have much opportunity to go sightseeing, I could still note some of the destruction from the war years. Quite a few of our relatives and friends had lost loved ones. When I met some of my friends, I would often remark that we were lucky to have survived the war and lucky that we were able to see each other again. This was especially so when I met some of my classmates from the Diocesan Girls' School or from The University of Hong Kong. Two from DGS, Albertina Prata (who had been

regarded as Eva's best friend) and Lolita de Souza (my friend), would join Eva and me for lunch, and we all enjoyed our reunions in town.

With The University of Hong Kong classmates, reunions were even more frequent. After the war there were more than a dozen of us who were still around. From time to time we organised a get-together, sometimes at the Alumni Association, sometimes at the home of a classmate, and occasionally at some restaurant. I was much impressed with the fact that the "boys" enjoyed the fellowship so much that they seemed to be rejuvenated, so I took some pains and organised the group in various ways. We decided to ask the wife of each classmate to come along and most did, although a few were too shy to join us. With some careful research I was able to find the birth dates and other significant anniversaries of my former classmates. I then prepared lists of the dates, which seemed to interest everybody. The chief clerk of the Faculty of Arts, Mr W.Y. Ng, was still at his post. He was so interested in our group that he asked to join us, and we gladly welcomed him. During the ensuing years, we all enjoyed those reunions, held at least once or twice a year. Sometimes we would celebrate someone's birthday or the wedding of one of their children. When there were some out-of-town classmates who visited Hong Kong, or some friendly professors who had retired from the colony, we would have a special dinner to mark the occasion. Occasionally we would invite the Vice-Chancellor, Dr (later Sir) Lindsey Ride, to join us.

Meanwhile, large numbers of refugees gradually began to pour in from the Chinese mainland as the Civil War between the Nationalists and Communists became more intense. Some of these refugees, as noted, were industrialists from Shanghai and its neighbouring provinces. The destruction during World War II provided the industrialists an excellent opportunity to put up newer and more modern buildings for their homes, factories, schools, and other purposes. Meanwhile, buildings that had not been completely destroyed were renovated and used as tenement buildings, small private schools, and more often than not, workshops. Some other refugees were fortunate enough to have relatives or friends who, in accordance with typical Chinese practice, would put them up, even though they had only limited accommodation themselves. Of course this could not last indefinitely, and those who were even more unfortunate did not have anyone to whom they could turn. The Hong Kong Government publishes an annual yearbook describing its main activities that includes a brief, informative section

on the history of Hong Kong. For instance, *Hong Kong 1969* records that the Chinese population returned to the colony at the rate of nearly 100,000 a month. The population was about 600,000 in August 1945 when the war ended, but by the end of 1947 it had risen to an estimated 1.8 million. Consequently, the three of us—Junie, our amah, and myself—were returning with the tide.

Father was already 50 years old when China became a republic. He most definitely identified himself as a Chinese British subject, so that his mentality was largely that of a Chinese gentleman. His education was based on traditional Chinese ideas and customs, and he could still recite many passages from the Chinese classics and even composed a couple of Chinese poems for people when he wanted to express some special appreciation. One poem he gave to a secretary, Wei Tai (who sent it to me shortly before he passed away), and another he composed for me. There may have been others, but I have never heard of Father ever trying to compose an English poem.

After we returned to Hong Kong from north China in the autumn of 1946, Junie and I—together with our amah, Hing Jie—lived as part of Father's household at Idlewild for ten years until he passed away in April 1956. Afterward, in accordance with the instructions in his Will, we continued to stay there for another five years. Father lived in his large first-floor bedroom, which was just above the ground-floor sitting room; we lived in the basement, just two storeys below Father's bedroom. This was the first time in my life that we had been living in the same house for any length of time. Although (unlike other families) we did not see each other every day, he knew that I was readily available, especially when he wanted me to assist him in his voluminous correspondence and occasional speeches. My daughter saw even less of him, although she lived in the same house. Knowing how busy he always was with his directors' meetings, health care, treatments, and rest periods, we did not dare disturb him. I thus treasure a casual photograph of the three of us, taken on the roof terrace of the annex to Idlewild, probably on a Sunday morning during winter when the sunshine there was especially welcome. Father held hands with Junie and me, his two attendants peering out from behind our shoulders.

Any time he wanted me, Father could send one of his attendants to ask me to go upstairs and see him. He might want to ask me something or to request me to do some written work for him. He had always shown

his affection in a reserved manner, yet was constantly very polite in making his requests. He knew that I would never refuse to do what he asked of me, and I was glad to be of service to him. I felt this way partly because he was my father and partly because my Chinese sense of filial duty demanded that a child should serve one's parents in such a way. In addition, I always felt especially grateful to Father for going out of his way to write that little letter to my mothers after I had been with him in Macau—the letter that helped me leave Hong Kong again in 1928 to continue my postgraduate studies at Teachers' College.

However, I must also admit quite honestly that it was not always convenient for me to pay heed to his requests, especially when he asked me to provide him with a list of all my appointments a week ahead of time. I felt it restricted my freedom. Nevertheless, I complied with his requests until I started my job at the Education Department, when I simply told him that I could not continue to predict my engagements a week ahead of time, which he accepted. Whenever he needed me, we could always arrange a time convenient to both of us.

One day, when Father came home after a meeting of the Court of The University of Hong Kong, he told me that his fellow members had tried to persuade him to donate HK\$1 million to build a hostel for the women students. He asked for my opinion. Naturally, I told him I thought it was a good idea. We agreed that it was a lot of money, but I pointed out that it was much better that he donated it while he was alive, and could hear people's appreciation and feel rewarded, than to wait and leave it in his Will. Gradually, the verbal promise made at the meeting was substantiated and the builders started work. In due course, when the structure was nearing completion, the university informed Father of the opening ceremony date a couple of months hence, and indicated that they would like him to say something on the occasion.

Father wanted me to write the first draft of the speech. I asked him for any special ideas he wanted me to incorporate, and we discussed one or two points, but he left it largely to me. When I had completed the first draft, I brought it to him. We discussed it further and he added one or two other points; in this way we worked on the draft for several sessions over many weeks. His secretary, Elsie, typed them up. When he was fairly satisfied with our efforts, he asked Elsie to prepare a covering letter to be sent to Mr Jack Braga, the son of his good friend and former consultant, Mr J.P. Braga. Jack was a writer and did what he could to improve the draft somewhat, then the speech was

ready. Father never read his speeches because he said that his hands shook and he could not hold the paper steady. On the other hand, he had an excellent memory, probably because he started his education in a traditional Chinese school and so was used to learning long passages of the Chinese classics by heart. Whenever he had to give a speech before any gathering, he would first prepare it very carefully - as he had done in this instance—then he would take pains to commit the whole speech to memory.

When he felt he had mastered the contents, he sent for me to hear him recite the speech from memory. I was quite surprised at his achievement, but when he asked me how well he had done, I had to be honest and told him that it deserved "about 60 marks." Naturally, he was not content with that, so he put in some more hard work. Later, he again asked me to assess his performance, and I gave him "80 marks." He still was not satisfied, so he drilled some more. Finally I gave him "90 marks," and suggested he could leave it at that, as nobody would be holding the script and checking where he might be deviating from it. Moreover, he practiced saying the speech with expression, so that it sounded like a perfectly impromptu speech. Prof R.K.M. Simpson, near the end of his foreword for Jean's *Eastern Windows Western Skies*, refers to the occasion in these terms:

Of the hundreds listened to, half-a-dozen were speeches to remember. One was by Sir Robert Ho Tung in 1951. He was then 88 years old and extremely frail. It was the late afternoon of a cold day in March. He stood erect in the open air among a scattered crowd of whom none failed to hear a single word. He did not read from a written speech; neither did he falter, hum nor haw. He had so clearly thought out what he had to say that he seemed to voice an extempore meditation. His thoughts were direct and sincere. He was speaking at the opening of the Lady Ho Tung University Hostel.

During the next few days Father was happy because not only were newspaper accounts quite salutary, but both Governor and Lady Grantham sent handwritten notes to thank him for his generosity. Lady Grantham had even signed herself "Yours affectionately." He received many other similar letters from friends and acquaintances. On that day, when he reached home, he thanked me sincerely for my share in preparing him. I was genuinely grateful for his generosity to the alma mater of several of my siblings and myself and proud of his



performance on the occasion. Perhaps I might add here that for all my services I received no salary, but Father did provide the three of us with our board and lodging. For Christmas he gave each of his children some present or a small cheque. One year he had someone buy me a small black purse, which I was told cost HK\$200. He even told me not to tell my sisters, for fear they might be jealous!

Ever vigilant regarding his health, father weighed himself every day—sometimes a couple of times—and also had his pulse and temperature taken frequently. That he had become quite hard of hearing in his old age was in some respects a blessing in disguise, because he used to be a light sleeper. In his twilight years, he managed to sleep considerably better. Even before his long illness in 1913 Father always had to have his meals alone, though occasionally he would invite us, sometimes one at a time, to go down to No 83 to have "tiffin" (lunch) with him. His diet consisted mainly of yoghurt—which his staff learned to culture for him—and he varied the amount according to how his digestive system was behaving. He sometimes also took soft rice or soft boiled noodles, with small quantities of other food to go with these starchy items, as he had upper and lower dentures and could not chew many foods. Decades before, some doctors in America had put him through a number of tests and discovered that his stomach did not secrete hydrochloric acid, so he had to take a few drops of it every meal. He had many doctors and outlived practically all of them except his last regular one, Dr P.K. Liang of Tientsin, who was the son of his good friend M.T. Liang and the eldest brother of my good friend Grace Liang Yapp. Trained in England, P.K. had excellent degrees and was a patient and successful doctor.

Although we were not a Christian family, my parents always liked the idea of having a large Christmas party, to which we generally invited Auntie Ho Fook (after she had been widowed), Mr and Mrs Ho Wing, and all our other siblings and their children. It was a merry and large gathering. In fact, we filled the whole dining room, whether at Idlewild or on the Peak. Father would have a simple meal in his bedroom earlier and then come down to join us without partaking of the food. The tables would be decorated with paper crackers, which we enjoyed pulling with whomever sat next to us; they broke off with a bang, and Father would even wear whatever head-gear had come out of his cracker. His cook for western foods, Kwan Sing, exerted his expert skills to prepare a traditional Christmas dinner, complete with

oxtail soup, roast turkey, stuffing, and various vegetables in season. The huge plum pudding—on which some brandy had been poured—was lit just before it was brought into the room with bright flames. Each year my sister Mary would shop for little souvenirs to be inserted into the plum pudding, including a genuine half-sovereign of real 22-carat gold. There was always great excitement over who would be fortunate enough to find that coin in his or her pudding. One year Junie was the lucky one.

In those years, from the end of World War II until his death in 1956, Father was often regarded as the "Grand Old Man of Hong Kong." Many well-known international people who came to the territory wished to call on him. To some he gave his consent, and on those occasions he often asked Eddie and me, probably because we were living at his house, to join him in receiving the guests. When the Governor of Macau called on him, Father had both of us there with him, and several photographs were taken to commemorate the occasion. At other times, he might attend a garden party at Government House, to which I was also invited in my own rights as a Justice of the Peace. On such occasions, he would ask me to go with him. At other times, I was invited to Government House to dinner on my own, so I came to know Sir Alexander and Lady Grantham quite well. In fact, when I spent a year in London after I retired from the Education Department, they frequently invited me to have tea with them in their apartment at Piccadilly. They allowed me to call them Uncle Alex and Auntie Maurine. He once told me, "I am now an expert dishwasher," because they did not employ a maid. Auntie did the cooking, and Uncle washed up. We came to know each other quite well, so when I asked him to write a foreword for my first book, *Clara Ho Tung*, the former governor graciously consented because he really knew me and many members of my family.

On one occasion, in January 1951, Father was invited by the Old Boys' Association of his alma mater, Queen's College, to attend the Cantonese opera held to raise funds for its Memorial Hall. I accompanied him, but he asked me to deliver his speech, on which both of us had been working for some time. There are two photos commemorating that occasion, one of which shows Father arriving at the ceremony, with my face seen just behind him; this photo is printed in the book by Mr and Mrs Stokes entitled *Queen's College: Its History, 1862-1987*. I also have a large photo of the honorary secretary of that organisation, C.C. Lo, and me on the platform just before the speech,

when Mr Lo was introducing me.

Occasionally, because Father had such excellent accommodation and an efficient cook for western food plus the necessary staff to do the work, when the occasion called for it I was able to borrow their services for a dinner or a farewell tea party on behalf of the Education Department or the Mental Health Association. I was grateful to be able to share these facilities with my colleagues and professional friends. Naturally, we gave some remuneration to the staff, but I always treated them as friends, and they were glad to help me. By way of illustration, I shall name just a few of those parties. When the President and Executive Director of the World Federation for Mental Health, Drs Frank Fremont Smith and Jack Rees, visited Hong Kong for four days over the New Year holidays of January 1955, the Committee of the Mental Health Association of Hong Kong gave them a dinner at Idlewild. Farewell tea parties were also organised, by the Inspectorate or the Education Department as a whole, to bid farewell to Mr and Mrs O'Connor and Mr and Mrs Ferguson, for which I had secured Father's permission to hold them at Idlewild. Miss Freda Gwilliams, from the Colonial Office in London, also came to Hong Kong on one of her inspection tours, and I borrowed the reception rooms from Father for the occasion. I believe all who attended those parties enjoyed them, especially because afterwards the building was demolished, and those visits gave them some memories of the old mansion.

Some time after I returned to stay in Hong Kong in 1946, I was allocated the western half of Idlewild's basement quarters, a room that brought back memories of Lady Margaret, H.H., the family and amahs, and the hardships imposed upon us as "refugees" in our own home during the early part of the Japanese occupation. During the war, the house had suffered from some degree of neglect. It was still a grand old building, of course. As I lived there for a total of 15 years, I had many chances to re-explore its grounds. When The University of Hong Kong was about to celebrate its 50th anniversary in 1961, Prof. Harrison, who was in charge of the book commemorating the occasion, asked Father's permission to take photos of various reception rooms and their contents. He kindly gave me a set.

When I passed through Shanghai on my way to Hong Kong, Eddie and his family were still in Shanghai, but some time afterwards he also came down to Idlewild and stayed in the other half of the large basement room. His two sons had gone to the United States to study, and

his two girls were boarders at the Canossa Convent and School in Caine Road. When they came back to Idlewild for their holidays, they stayed in one of the upstairs rooms.

In 1947, while Father was away on a trip to America and Idlewild was undergoing repairs and renovation, Vic sensibly persuaded him to build us a little bathroom-cum-kitchenette with a geyser for the bathtub and a little gas burner for cooking. Until that time, the central kitchen had prepared all the household food, our share of which would be fetched by the amah. The workmen also made a little cubicle that Hing Jie could use as her bedroom. All this was a great improvement and made our lives infinitely more comfortable, so I was eternally grateful to Vic for her consideration of us in this respect. She also advised Father to install some more permanent folding sliding doors to separate the two sections of the large room so that both Eddie and my family would have more privacy. Eddie and I were thus neighbours for many years, until his sudden death in 1957.

One day in 1947, I read an article in the South China Morning Post—Hong Kong's leading English-language newspaper—saying that Sir Robert Ho Tung had offered to donate a girls' school to the government. I congratulated him on his generosity and asked what sort of school he had in mind. He told me that he was not sure, but his idea was to have something similar to the Belilios Public School for Girls. The papers all congratulated Father for his generosity, and even the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London wrote to thank him. In those days Belilios was the only government Anglo-Chinese secondary school for girls, which meant that apart from Chinese language and Chinese history, English was the medium of instruction for all other subjects. After the war, the Clementi Middle School had also been established; it was coeducational and provided secondary education, with Chinese as the medium of instruction. The boys had Queen's College, King's College, and some junior secondary schools.

There was no question that Hong Kong needed another government secondary school for girls. However, one day when I saw the Education Department's Director, Mr Rowell, in his office, I asked him what type of school they were planning. He said that he had in mind a primary school, which I relayed to Father. In due course Mr Rowell arranged to bring Father to view a possible site, which he approved, but later the government learned that it had already been earmarked for another purpose, so they looked for an alternative. All

this took time; meanwhile, Mr Rowell retired. After Mr Crozier succeeded to the directorship, he studied the "pending action" files and noticed that this offer from Father had not yet been implemented. Because of the inaction, he estimated that the school could not be opened until 1953.

I vividly remember that Mr Crozier and I attended a cocktail party given by a member of our department in one of the Homestead flats. Mr Crozier came over and asked me: "A couple of years ago, your father promised to donate a school to the government. Does that offer still hold good?" Knowing the full background to the story, I replied unhesitatingly: "Of course it does." Mr Crozier at first tried to interest Father in a couple of sites, but when none met his approval, the Director wisely managed to persuade the other Department to relinquish its prior claim. So they went back to the first offer, which is the site upon which the school now stands. I had suggested to Father that he write to the Director requesting that it be a girls' technical school, because at that time the Education Department was just beginning to realise the need to develop technical education for girls. Consequently, the school was called the Ho Tung Technical School for Girls.

The new school had as its first Principal Mrs Kitty Cheung, who was previously teaching English at Clementi Middle School. Although Kitty was related to us—she was the granddaughter of Father's fifth younger brother, Mr Ho Kam Tong—that connection had hardly anything to do with her selection, which was based mainly on her own ability and qualifications. The school also had a good staff, partly selected from teachers already working in various government schools. Others were newly appointed because they had qualifications for the special courses on offer.

As a standing member of the selection boards for any new women teachers, I was automatically on the new school's selection board at which candidates were interviewed and hired. Unlike other government schools, this institution also had an advisory board. Father was asked to nominate someone to serve on it, and he nominated my eldest sister Vic, who took her responsibilities seriously indeed. Even more important, Vic had built up an excellent relationship with the Principal, our niece Kitty Cheung, and they both worked happily together with the advisory board.

Kitty was a good and energetic head, and she and her hard-working staff soon put the school on its feet. It was officially opened

just a few days before I went off on my UNESCO fellowship trip. A couple of months later, the school held its first Open Day. Although I did not attend myself, I was told that it was a real success. Many people wanted to see what this new "technical" school looked like and what it was trying to do. Over the years it has grown in strength in many ways. During my UNESCO trip, I had to spend a few days in Paris to see some administrators of that office who were interested in my award. I was asked some questions about education in Hong Kong. Naturally, I mentioned the new school. My questioner followed up by sending a questionnaire to Kitty, which meant that her school had been noted internationally. Today, the Ho Tung Technical School for Girls teaches up to Form Six. Its former students have entered many and varied walks of life and admirably justified its existence a hundredfold.

Being who he was, Father was constantly asked to donate to this or that cause. He gave to some, but many he had to refuse. Yet he took the trouble to reply to most requests, which took up a lot of his secretary's time. At times I was also involved in wording his replies. When these appeals referred to educational projects, Father generally discussed them with me first before deciding. A good illustration was a little village school that used to be housed in the old clan hall of the Tang family in Kam Tsin Village, Sheung Shui, New Territories, where his farm, the Tung Ying Hok Po, was situated. The old building was really not suitable for a school, and student numbers had grown considerably. The village elders who constituted the school's board of trustees thus wanted Father to help them construct a new building on land they could provide near the main road.

The villagers were clever enough to first approach an elderly Eurasian, S.M. Churn, who had a little country house in the neighbourhood. He knew Father quite well, so one day Father received a letter from Mr Churn relaying the villagers' appeal. Father asked for my opinion, and naturally I backed the project to the full. I had seen the old school in the village and did everything in my power to help bring the project to fruition. Eventually, the new facility materialised and was named the Kam Tsin Village Ho Tung School. I have visited the school and its extension many times, both professionally and out of personal interest.

Speaking of the Homestead flats always makes me feel nostalgic. Originally, Father had owned the property on which these flats were built, and as a child I remember occasionally going to that place where

an elderly Indian used to keep goats. It was a large and fairly level site that Father had bought and kept undeveloped for a long time. He rented it out to the Indian, whom Father probably regarded merely as a caretaker. When we were adolescents, I remember Mamma one day having a chat with Eva and me, pointing out that we were so overcrowded in the bungalow and the two-storey house, whereas Father had this piece of land available. We all thought: "Wouldn't it be good if we could persuade Father to consider building on the Homestead site, so that there would be space enough to accommodate us all." I strongly agreed with Mamma and wrote a long memo to Father on the matter.

Father saw our point of view and asked an architect to make a preliminary sketch, which he submitted to the government. When the government saw the sketch, they realised what a large and valuable piece of property it was. They asked Father to exchange it for a small but commercially valuable site in the busy Chinese business section of the colony, a triangular lot right on Queen's Road West. Consequently, that lot also became valuable. Father agreed to the exchange and started developing the new site into a four-storey structure, the Ho Tung Building, which flourished as a Chinese business venture. But all this still left us with the dilemma of our family's overcrowded living conditions.

On the Homestead site, the government constructed one large building that was divided into six fair-sized flats for senior high-ranking government officers. There was still a good deal of land left over, so the government built another two-storey building for officers of even higher rank. For instance, the Director of the Education Department was allocated one of them. During my years at the Education Department, I had many opportunities to visit the occupants of the flats or houses and was sometimes tempted to tell them my story.

While I was at university, around 1924, my parents at last found a home site with a little stream running beside the property that produced a small waterfall in the rainy season. The former owners thus called the house "The Falls." It already had a small swimming pool, which especially attracted Mamma's interest. My parents bought the property and the leading British architects, Messrs Palmer and Turner, were asked to draw up the plans. Mamma gave them her own ideas and suggestions, many of which they incorporated. The pool was tiled and had two small changing rooms nearby, connected by a moon gate. A pagoda and statue of the Goddess of Mercy, Kuan Yin, were built on

the grounds near the swimming pool. When we went to England in 1927, we took a copy of the plans with us. While in London, I spent much time helping Mamma order the chandeliers and other furnishings from a leading firm.

By the time the house was ready for occupation, we older children—Eddie, Eva, myself, and Robbie—had all gone abroad for our higher education, so the crowded conditions had already been eased. However, the younger ones were able to enjoy the new property, especially later when Mamma invited the grandchildren and their parents to visit her each summer. During my Lingnan years, Florence and I of course returned to the Falls for our holidays. The Falls continued to be home for me until the Battle for Hong Kong.

Father was always busy with his board meetings—I believe in the late 1940s he was still a director of at least ten large companies. He enjoyed serving on the boards, as they enabled him to keep in touch with business affairs in Hong Kong and elsewhere. I remember one day saying to him: "Why do you still want to serve on so many boards? You should let the younger people take over." He replied that they did not have to vote for him unless they wanted to. I said that if he offered himself for re-election, people might hesitate to vote for anybody else for fear he might feel insulted. Then I added: "You should not offer yourself for re-election."

He may or may not have given thought to my suggestions, yet I know that gradually he did relinquish a few more directorships. In several cases, M.K. was elected in his place. However, until his death at age 93 in April 1956, Father remained a director of about six companies. Many years earlier, when he was still staying at No 83, in reply to our suggestions to "slow down" he pointed to the row of large glass bottles that had contained Horlick's Malted Milk. There were half a dozen, each with metal screwtop covers, and Father replied: "We open this first bottle every day and you can see its lid is in good condition; on the other hand, we hardly ever open the second one, and it is beginning to rust out. I want to wear out, I don't want to rust out!"



## Schools Inspector

**I**n October 1948, the Hong Kong government appointed a committee "to consider and make recommendations as to how far Chinese law and custom as existing in 1843 (a) is now applicable to Chinese domiciled in Hong Kong or to other Chinese resorting here; (b) should with or without modification be incorporated by Ordinance into the law of the Colony; (c) should, whether already incorporated or not, be superseded, with or without modification, by the law of the Colony applicable to persons to whom such Chinese law and custom does not apply or by any other law; and generally to consider and make recommendations as to what is the best course, legislative or otherwise, to adopt in relation to Chinese law and custom in force in Hong Kong."

The Hong Kong Council of Women was a new voluntary organisation established after the war. When its members heard that the Government was thinking of appointing such a committee, they petitioned the legislature to request that a woman should be included. The Government decided to appoint me, but when I received the letter I was in a quandary about whether to accept, since I had just joined the Education Department in May of that same year. I submitted the letter of appointment to my new employer, the Director of Education, and asked for his ruling on the matter. Permission was granted for me to join the committee, especially as its meetings were to be held after office hours and would thus not interfere with my work.

At first the committee met once a fortnight beginning on February 3, 1949; then from July 1950, once a week; and during November 1950, twice a week. This was because Mr Strickland, the Solicitor-General who served as committee chairman, was due to go on

leave, and we wanted to finish before his departure. The committee consisted originally of seven persons, with myself being the only woman present. An eighth member was later added and then a ninth, who had served as a judge in China. He was invited to answer questions on specific points in which he had special knowledge, but he did not sign the report with us. I felt very ignorant because my legal knowledge was limited to a course in jurisprudence I had taken at The University of Hong Kong. However, we were provided with a lot of "homework"—various legal documents that were duplicated and given to each of us at every meeting to study in preparation for the subsequent meeting. At the sessions my male colleagues were kind and polite to me and excused my ignorance. However, whenever it came to any topic about women, I felt it was my duty to speak out from a woman's point of view. Indeed, I felt this was the reason I was asked to serve on the committee in the first place.

One of the problems that was causing considerable hardship and suffering for some of the female members of the Chinese community was the degeneration and abuse of traditional Chinese marriage customs. Originally, a man would have a "tsai," meaning a first wife, but he was also permitted to have one or more "tsips," subsidiary spouses who would take secondary positions in the Chinese family circle. In olden days the husband was expected to first obtain his wife's consent before taking a subsidiary spouse, after which he would then publicly announce his intention to do so by giving a special dinner party for his relatives and friends. The tsip was obliged to go through a "yap kung" ceremony at which she would kowtow and serve tea to the first wife, who would give the tsip a new name under which she would join the family circle. Times were changing, and instead of the relative harmony that had once existed within these traditional, polygamous families, there was often now considerable friction. The matter was of sufficient importance to be high on the agenda of local women's organisations such as the Hong Kong Chinese Women's Club and the Hong Kong Council of Women, and naturally it was of particular interest to me.

Among the men on the committee, one of them invariably held the opinion opposite to mine, yet I would maintain my point of view and quite often several of the other men would give me their support. Of course, I was a married woman and had also grown up in a family where my father had two legal wives and a concubine, so I could, within

reason, understand the man's, the woman's, and the children's points of view. I was strongly in favour of preserving that which is good in traditional Chinese customs and ideas, but in this case it seemed time for them to be amended. The various women's organisations of which I was a part had collected much evidence of the suffering experienced by families where old practices had degenerated into nothingness. Many of us believed that the time had come for Hong Kong to stop giving legal recognition to a system that was causing so many problems.

I am pleased to say that this opinion was supported in the committee's final report on the matter, which was put before the Executive Council. However, the alternative point of view was propounded in a minority report produced at the same time by one of our members. He had lost out at the committee stage, being of the opinion that "a Chinese husband needed concubines," but he had managed to continue the argument through an influential brother in the administration. The government thus asked the brother to write a memorandum and have it published at the same time as our report. Consequently, our recommendations concerning marriage and the taking of tsips were not implemented until many years later; in fact, not until after the sudden death of the brother.

Fortunately for Hong Kong women, a strong warrior continued to fight for their cause in the person of Mrs Ellen Li Shu-pui (later to become an "L.L.D.", a "Doctor of Law," and a member of the Legislative Council). She went on doggedly to pursue the report's objectives until the matter was finally acted upon by government. The actual wording of our recommendation on this point is clear from the following excerpts:

- (i) It should be made unlawful, after a day to be appointed, for a Chinese domiciled in Hong Kong to take a "tsip" or "concubine."
- (ii) The status of tsips taken before the appointed day is to remain unaffected.
- (iii) The status of children of tsips taken before the appointed day, whether born before or after the appointed day, is to remain unaffected, i.e. such children will continue to be legitimate.
- (iv) ... a polygamous union will be unlawful for a Chinese domiciled in Hong Kong, and all marriages will imply a voluntary union for the life of the husband and the tsai to the exclusion of all others . . .
- (v) Chinese modern marriages, i.e. an open ceremony before at least two witnesses, should be validated with retrospective effect and should be permissible in future.

(vi) . . . Chinese marriage, whether customary or modern, will not be complete without registration.

At the budget debate of March 1948, Mr Rowell's request for a Woman Inspector of Vernacular Schools was passed, and he was thus in a position at last to ask me to join his team. I joined the Education Department on May 2, 1948, and Mr K.H. Yuen, who was then serving as Secretary to the Director of Education, escorted me from the department's head office to the inspectorate, which was housed in the old Post Office building. There, my senior colleagues were Messrs Y.P. Law, Yu Wan, and I.S. Wan, all of whom had been there for decades, plus two other junior colleagues. Thus there were a half-dozen inspectors and about a dozen sub-inspectors, all of them male. I was the only woman in that branch of the department. Actually, there was another female inspector, Miss Eve Gray, but she worked at the head office and not in the inspectorate. Soon after I retired 13 years later, the total number of inspectorate staff had risen to well over one hundred.

This was the first job I had held in Hong Kong, and I did not want or expect any special consideration for whatever reason. I dutifully respected my seniors, was polite and friendly to my colleagues—the other inspectors and clerical staff with whom I had dealings—and was kind and understanding to the menial staff. Among other ideas, I soon suggested that the inspectors and sub-inspectors each pay a little so that every officer could be served a cup of tea or coffee at mid-morning and mid-afternoon. When there was a visitor, such as the principal of a school or even a teacher, he or she would also be provided with refreshments. This helped to promote a more friendly atmosphere between department officials and the public. After a couple of years, I suggested that we hold a Christmas party for our section of the department, a plan that was approved. My amah, Hing Jie, made the dozens of sandwiches at our home that were happily consumed.

As I wanted to have a good picture of the general education system, I needed time to become oriented with the schools. Fortunately, I was allowed to visit any school that interested me, and I really enjoyed the weeks I spent gaining firsthand information about the many reputable establishments people had recommended. Invariably, we were expected to write a report on each of our visits within a couple of days. I always tried to write about the good points, but when I witnessed any shortcomings, I would mention these as tactfully as possible to the school teacher or the principal involved—or, if

necessary, have a quiet word with the inspector in charge of that school.

After a couple of months, my superiors wanted to assign me to a specific group of schools, which would be placed under my care. They first thought of asking me to take charge of the private English schools, as my command of that language seemed to them to be fairly good. However, I discovered that most of those establishments were evening schools—many in tenement buildings—so I declined that assignment, pointing out that I would not feel safe visiting them in the evenings. Although I did not mention it, another strong reason for turning down this posting was that I felt I should be able to spend the evenings with my daughter, after her school day was over.

Finally it was decided to divide the schools on the northern side of Hong Kong Island into eastern and western districts, and I was placed in charge of the eastern district. This suited me perfectly. My mother's Buddhist Po Kok School and others started by Chinese educators, many of whom I already knew from my Lingnan University days, were in that district. I really tried my best to help that group of schools, individually and collectively, while they were under my administration. I was obliged to visit schools with proven standards only once or twice a year, but I would go to the weaker ones more frequently. I remember one particular school that I visited every month, to see if they had tried to put any of my suggestions into practice.

I always tried to consider the welfare of the students first, then that of the teachers, and finally the interests of the school. For instance, at one school the principal was a noted businessman. He had had postgraduate training in education in the United States. I felt he was quite hard on his teachers, so I asked him to allow me to attend one of his faculty meetings. We discussed a number of educational ideas, but I also reminded him that it was beneficial for him to treat the teachers properly, since it was they who had to deal directly with the students day by day. When this principal built a new school and scheduled the opening ceremony for a Sunday morning, neither the Director nor the Deputy Director of the Education Department wanted to officiate, so I volunteered. I recounted to the gathering how well the school had developed quantitatively and expressed a hope that it would also develop qualitatively. The principal was probably furious with me, but it was an excellent opportunity to put a word in.

In those days the section for the registration of schools and teachers had not yet been established, so we inspectors had to do all that

work as well. When the health officer from the School Health Service (which came under the Medical Department) had inspected conditions at a school, he would draft a report. But it was the Education Department inspector in charge of that particular school who would have to sign the letter informing the school head of what had to be done.

Some of the old buildings in my district lacked modern sanitary sewage facilities, hence the problem of night soil was still being dealt with by the use of dry pans that were serviced every night. The men or women who cleared and cleaned the dry pans sold the contents to farmers. Quite often the health officer's report involved a question of the cleanliness of the students' toilets, such as stains in the water closets or the condition of the dry pans. Up until then, I never realised that such a large part of Hong Kong still relied on primitive sanitation. I therefore decided that instead of merely writing reports about them, I should see for myself what conditions were really like. I was probably the first inspector who regularly asked to see student toilets. When the news got around, principals themselves also began to take more interest in those basic conditions that so much affected the health of their students. I remember sometimes finding dry pans inadequately covered. I would then go into some neighbouring classroom and ask the children why it was necessary to have the pans covered. This would lead to a discussion with the little ones about unsanitary conditions and how flies carried disease.

I felt that my responsibility extended to the children's welfare, even in such small ways. For example, in the colder weather, when I noticed many children with runny noses, we would teach them how to keep them clean. I remember once or twice seeing children suffering from mumps, with necks and cheeks painted with a paste made by grinding water buffalo horns or with mud from the bottom of a well, both of which are "standard" Chinese methods of treating the disease of "mumps." On each occasion, I advised the school to send the child home to avoid infecting others. Many a time, I could spot a child who had eye defects and would have him or her referred to an eye clinic where the doctor would generally confirm that the child needed glasses.

Of course, many of my observations related to academic matters. Occasionally I would notice the teacher writing an incorrect character in Chinese on the blackboard or making some other mistake in class. I usually managed to wait until the lesson was over and then tactfully bring the error to the teacher's attention. It was not always easy to avoid

offence, but I did my best.

About this time the Education Department started its audio-visual section. I found it had a number of good instructional films, with excellent musical effects. I remember one in particular, called *Instruments of the Orchestra*. It introduced and described each musical instrument in detail in an interesting way. Unfortunately, few schools then had the facilities to show such films. I therefore suggested to the Education Department that we try to persuade some of the cinemas in town to lend their facilities on Sunday mornings. The free tickets thus obtained were distributed to various schools under the auspices of the department, and thousands of students were able to enjoy those extremely worthwhile educational films. However, I soon realised that the scheme also gave our clerical staff a good deal of additional work with no extra pay. After the project had run for some months, I thus recommended that we discontinue it.

The Education Department originally defined the permitted size of any classroom by stipulating that each student be given 10 square feet of floor space. This was partly due to a sudden influx of large numbers of refugees from China. Subsequently, the department decided to change the space regulations by allowing 100 cubic feet of air space per child instead, a move of significant importance *vis-a-vis* the amount of air available for children to breathe. It also meant that schools having classrooms with high ceilings could accommodate a few extra children. One very businesslike school had rooms with particularly high ceilings. These had been divided into classes by semi-permanent partitions. However, during the summer holidays the partitions were all moved, which enabled the school to take full advantage of the new regulations and admit a few extra students. This brought in a little more income.

The scramble to enter the government primary schools system was intense, chiefly because the fees there were more reasonable than in most private schools. Moreover, the chance of being promoted into government and grant-aided secondary schools was much better, although the teaching standards in some of the best private or grant-aided schools were in some respects a little higher. Originally students were admitted into government primary schools only after passing some sort of test (even for first graders). There were various ways of selecting the students. This choice was left to the school heads, but it was not considered a fair system. Eventually the authorities

decided that it would draw lots to select the lucky ones to be admitted.

As a colleague described the process to me at the time, each school sent one of its teachers to the Education Department. There the application forms of all students wishing to enter government schools were placed in separate stacks. Each teacher was given one stack and told to count the forms and pull out every seventh form, which represented the lucky candidate to be admitted. Meanwhile, the department was able to convince the Government and the Legislative and Executive Councils of the urgent need to build more schools. When I first joined the department, the Government might build one new primary school in five years, but after the building spree got moving, it began to construct five new schools a year.

One of the most satisfying aspects of my work for the Education Department were those occasions when I was able to help a school develop, as my early association with the Confucian Academy allowed. Originally there was a small Confucian Tai Shing School in Caine Road on Hong Kong Island which decided it needed to rebuild or move. I was working at the Battery Path offices one day when without warning one of the menial staff ushered in Mr Lo Sheung Fu and several members of his committee. I was delighted to see him, since he had been my former principal and teacher. He explained that they were all from the Confucian Academy and together formed the Tai Shing School Council, which ran a primary school. Mr Lo explained that he and his friends wanted my advice about their little school, which was fast outgrowing its premises. They could not decide if they should tear down the existing building and rebuild on the same site or try to find other land for the school. The problem was that the existing site was so small that they would need to build a skyscraper if they wanted to expand the facilities to any appreciable degree.

At that time the Education Department was encouraging local organisations to establish schools. They would often give both land and a building subsidy, as well as funds to help with teachers' salaries and equipment. The school would then have to change from being a private school to a government-subsidised establishment. I thought it was a good scheme and recommended it to Mr Lo for his school. I rang the Assistant Director of the Education Department, who was in charge of such things, and took the four men up to his office. I left the final decision to them and did not follow up on it. However, this brief incident led to the development of a new and better Confucian Tai Shing School. It would be immodest of me not to feel a touch of satisfaction at having had a



hand in the matter, albeit a small one.

The Government did have a School Health Service at the time, but at first it was confined for use only by government and subsidised schools. Then some senior officer of the Medical Department figured out a method of extending the service. If we could find enough students whose parents were prepared to pay a designated small amount of money each year, the Medical Department could employ sufficient numbers of doctors, dentists, and other ancillary staff to take care of students' health needs from all types of schools. The Medical and Education Departments set about selling the idea to those who would apply for it and those who would benefit most from the plan.

At first the school administrators and parents from private schools doubted that the proposed scheme could really work, because the suggested price was so low. It was too good to be true, so there was insufficient response. The project was about to fail. However, some of us felt it would be a great pity to give up such a worthy scheme, so we asked for permission to give the proposal another try. We drafted a carefully worded circular explaining the idea more clearly and set a date to call a large meeting of the heads or representatives of all the private schools, where most of the school children were then enrolled. I volunteered to explain the idea to them and allowed time at the meeting for questions to be asked and answered in detail.

To encourage teachers to promote the idea, we made it possible for them to be enrolled on the same terms as students. Within a couple of months, enrollments had grown so rapidly that the Medical Department became worried that the scheme was growing too large and that it would be unable to afford the additional doctors and dentists needed for the health-care plan to work properly. Consequently, about two years after the service had begun, it had to be frozen as there were no funds for its expansion. The schools' dental service also had to be discontinued for a while. Fortunately, some years later, thanks to the efforts of medical administrators such as Dr Gerald Choa, the director of Medical and Health Services, and to the generosity of benefactors such as Sir Shiu-kin Tang, Hong Kong was able to establish its own Dental Training School. Today I derive considerable pleasure from seeing groups of healthy school children being escorted, class by class, to the dental clinics for screening. And, of course, I relish seeing parents getting involved when they take their children along for the follow-up work. I know that my feelings are shared by all those who fought hard

to extend the school health and dental services to Hong Kong's private schools.

One of my other duties in the Education Department was to attend selection and promotion boards for government school teachers. The boards always consisted of several department officers, and if there were women candidates, I would always be on the board. After a few years, I was even asked to serve when men candidates were being considered. The school principal concerned was also invited to be present when the candidate was being considered. The department's clerical staff prepared a summary of the candidates' qualifications to help the board in its selection. Naturally, we would have ample opportunity to ask the candidates any questions, to which they would respond as best they could. There is a Confucian saying that goes somewhat like this:

If you know a thing, say that you know it.  
If you do not know a thing, say that you don't know it.  
That is real knowledge.

We found this deceptively simple saying quite appropriate to the candidates undergoing selection. Some would claim that they knew, or could do, everything. We on the board had little doubt when someone was simply boasting. On the other hand, some candidates were so timid and modest that when we asked them if they could do certain things, they were always inclined to say no, even if we repeated the questions in an attempt to "winkle" the truth out of them. When asked if they were able to tackle an unfamiliar task, the clever ones usually said that although they had never done it, they believed they could give it a good try. These were often the ones who were eventually chosen. Part of the procedure was a report written and submitted by the head of the school concerned, together with another report by the Education Department official who had inspected that particular teacher. We generally tried hard to help teachers if they deserved the promotion. However, sometimes one or both of those reports would be negative, and it was almost impossible to help the teacher in any way. In one case at least, I knew of a teacher who was unsuccessful after two or three of these promotion boards; she never got over her disappointment.

My work for the Education Department was neither dull nor routine, as there was always too much going on. Sometimes we would be asked to go as a team to organise a full inspection of a school. When

this happened, I was frequently put in charge, which meant that I had to lead the team, edit the reports of the individual inspectors, and generally be responsible for the project. We undertook quite a few full inspections. What was really impressive was that the schools did not seem to resent our presence. I remember that St Stephen's College at Stanley, which many years before had obtained from London an exemption from our inspections, actually wrote to the department to request that we give them a full inspection. Again I was asked to lead this team. Fortunately, there was real camaraderie among the inspectorate staff, which helped to generate the full cooperation of everyone concerned. As the task was then structured, we also had to register schools and teachers, so inspectors performed these duties for all the private schools in their individual district. In later years, this duty was taken over by the newly appointed Registrar of Schools.

When I first joined the Education Department, there were only four special schools in Hong Kong: two for the deaf and two for the blind. One of the headmasters was himself both deaf and dumb. I inspected his school and found that his Chinese standard was quite high, with his exceedingly good blackboard Chinese writing. He usually served as a court interpreter whenever a case came up that involved a person with hearing disabilities. He was also an expert on Chinese sign language. Whenever he came to the department to discuss something with me, we would discuss the topic in writing at my desk. His school for the deaf happened to be in my own administrative district, but I made it a point to visit the other school for those with impaired hearing and also the two schools for the blind. I wrote a memorandum to the department pointing out that these were actually special schools and should not be left under the care of whoever happened to be in charge of the school district.

Meanwhile, The University of Hong Kong was setting up a one-year postgraduate course for the training of secondary teachers and had appointed a professor of education to be in charge. Prof Priestley invited me to undertake a lecture course on educational theory and practice in China, a topic that had been part of my own Ph.D thesis. I taught a small group and thoroughly enjoyed going to my alma mater for this special assignment. Of course, I had the full permission of the Education Department to do so and was simply seconded to the job. Some of my students entered responsible positions when they

graduated. For instance, one or two became heads of large grant-aided schools. I continued with this course for several years until it was time for me to leave on my United Nations Education, Social, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Fellowship.

The University of Hong Kong also appointed its first educational psychologist, Miss Marie Clements, a move that boded well for the future of education in the territory. Marie was trained at the famous Tavistock Clinic in London, where I had attended many special public courses. We thus spoke each other's language, though of course she was a professional and I was an amateur, I had only picked up a few crumbs of her expertise. Meanwhile, the Medical Department appointed its first psychiatrist, Dr P.M. Yap, as superintendent of its mental hospital, which was formerly called the "lunatic asylum."

A group of us, including Dr Yap, Miss Clements, Mr Peterson (from the Social Welfare Department), Miss Ho Chung Chung, her colleague Dr Lo Wai-hing, and myself, put our heads together and organised the embryonic Mental Health Association, which we at first called the Mental Health Study Group. Miss Clements used the telephone directory to obtain a list of names, and we contacted school teachers, social workers, and nurses. She was due to give the first lecture, so we invited the director of the Education Department to take the chair. By then Mr Rowell had retired and been succeeded by Mr D.J.S. Crozier, who could not attend the lecture. So Deputy Director Morgan came instead and was pleasantly surprised to see the audience of more than one hundred. The local Chinese newspapers had given us good publicity, and our circulars had also done their work. From then on we held monthly lectures about eight times a year, skipping the hot, repressive summer months and the Christmas and New Year holidays for obvious reasons. After a year or so, we became the Mental Health Association of Hong Kong. Thanks to the dedicated leadership and concern of all those who were to follow us, the Association is now doing excellent work throughout the territory, well beyond what its early promoters dared hope or dream of achieving. However, from the outset we had the satisfaction of seeing many mentally handicapped students prove themselves, with some achieving notable success.

In 1949 the Gold and Silver Exchange Association obtained land from the government and built its new school next to the Po Leung Kuk, which was within my bailiwick. I suggested to the director that we ask the school to give the department fifty free places for disadvantaged

students who otherwise could not gain admission to a government or subsidised school. He took my advice and, as I was inspector-in-charge of the district, it naturally fell upon me to recommend some of the candidates. Mr Chung King-pui of the Secretariat for Chinese Affairs recommended a boy, Chan Shui-tong, whose father had worked in his department. Young Chan had experienced considerable difficulty with his schooling. We were told that he was about 14 years old and had earlier suffered from meningitis, which had made him slow of learning; in previous schools he had been jeered at by some of his schoolmates. I agreed that this case deserved consideration. Therefore we referred the lad to the new school, where he was interviewed, tested, and placed in first grade.

I made frequent visits to that school, which was also doing good work in other ways. On those occasions the school administrators invariably asked Chan Shui-tong to come into the office to see me. They made a point to give him special attention: in addition to the rudiments of core academic subjects, they taught him acceptable social manners and other basic but essential skills, such as how to tell the time. I felt that the school was doing its best for the lad. He seemed to agree, for he sent me a Christmas card each year, a gesture I always acknowledged. At the end of his first school year, Shui-tong sat for examinations but could not pass in several subjects, including arithmetic, which was an essential subject for promotion. Even after the second year he was still unable to pass in arithmetic, so the Dean of Studies, Mr Lo Ping-leung, an extremely capable educator, came to my office to discuss the matter. He explained that the school felt it had done its best for the lad, but it was clear that it could not do much more. Although they sympathised with him, they felt it was a pity to waste a school place some other deserving child could make better use of. I could understand this point of view, but instead of just throwing Shui-tong out, I wanted to refer the boy to someone familiar with cases like his for an independent assessment.

Hong Kong at that time did not yet have a child guidance clinic, but Dr Yap, the government psychiatrist serving as superintendent of the Mental Hospital, agreed to examine the boy. A representative of the school and Shui-tong's mother went with the boy to Dr Yap's office, where I met them. While we were in the waiting room, I asked Shui-tong what he personally would like to do. He replied: "I'd like to plant flowers." I asked him how he could plant flowers in Wanchai where he lived, and he told me that he had a garden on his roof at

home. His mother confirmed this and said he was good at looking after his plants. Dr Yap tested Shui-tong and then explained that even if the boy had never had meningitis he would still have found it difficult to live a normal life at school. The boy had an arched palate, a serious abnormality, but in the doctor's opinion Shui-tong was physically strong and could hold simple conversations on general matters, even though he was unable to cope with school work. Therefore, the proper thing to do was to determine his interests and try to steer him into some job that would suit his abilities. I told Dr Yap about our earlier conversation, and we agreed that gardening was an excellent solution. As a result, it was decided that I write back to Mr Chung at the Secretariat for Chinese Affairs suggesting that the lad be referred to the Government Gardens Department for a possible job. In due course, it was all arranged.

At the outset of his working life, a member of Shui-tong's family would take him each morning to the Botanical Gardens just opposite Government House where a senior gardener responsible for his training would take charge. In the evening, the family would collect him for the journey home. In this way Chan Shui-tong, who could not even progress beyond first grade, was able to obtain and hold a government job, with all its attendant medical and pension benefits. Many years later, in the late 1950s, I was at the Colonial Cemetery in Happy Valley visiting the graves of my Father and Lady Margaret. I asked one of the gardeners working on the roadside if he knew Chan Shui-tong, who was slightly retarded. The man said he did and offered to take me to him. We went to the upper terraces of the cemetery where there was a large nursery. My guide called out: "Ah Tong, someone wants to see you." He appeared almost at once and immediately recognised me.

I asked Shui-tong how he was getting along, and he said everything was fine. He told me his special assignment was to water the plants. In those days in Hong Kong every plant had to be watered by someone carrying a watering can, and there were hundreds of plants needing liquid sustenance each day. Shui-tong was particularly pleased by the fact that it was no longer necessary for his family to take him to work. He had a colleague who lived near his home, and they went to work together. In addition, he had been able to save up a good deal of his salary and had money to spend on whatever he liked, as his parents still supported him with board and lodging. This was a particularly successful solution to the problem of an educationally handicapped person.

One of the most important charitable organisations run by the Chinese community in Hong Kong is a special social welfare institution called the Po Leung Kuk. In those days it was under the guidance of the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, who is now called the Secretary for Home Affairs. The name Po Leung Kuk has a classical meaning that refers to its dual function of giving care and protection to children and providing rehabilitation and moral welfare for women. For various reasons women and children would from time to time become the responsibility of the government, which would send them to the Kuk to be cared for, not unlike an individual being declared a ward of the court in England. Today, however, most children are there because they need temporary care, as when the mother has to go to the hospital or to prison and there is no other relative who can look after them. Women are sent to the Kuk by the government for rehabilitation and moral welfare. Sometimes unmarried mothers go there to await the delivery of their babies. They give birth in a nearby hospital and then return home, while the babies are often left at the Kuk to await adoption. The organisation is fairly liberal and wide-ranging in its attitude, and women are taken care of for a variety of moral welfare reasons.

In 1937 women were included in the governor's appointments to the Kuk's board of directors for the first time. The next year I was one of two women who were thus appointed, a move that was generally regarded as an honour. During the period of this appointment, I had an opportunity to see and understand the internal arrangements of the Kuk, working there as part of the team. When I later joined the Education Department, I managed to visit the Kuk from time to time, both as a civil servant and as a former member of the board. I would then try to help the Kuk in whatever way I could. While I was on the board, we held regular meetings in the evening once or twice a week. We invariably had another meeting each Sunday morning to conduct a roll-call of all the Kuk's inhabitants at home in their quarters. During these visits I noticed that some of the young adults and a few of the children seemed mentally handicapped or retarded, an observation readily confirmed by their matron.

Some residents, adults as well as children, had been "lost" by their families and subsequently picked up by the police. Among them were young women who had been lured to places such as the Botanical Gardens, raped, and then left there. They did not know their way home (at least one of them could not even give her own name and address), so

they were found by the police and brought to the Secretariat for Chinese Affairs. As there was then no other suitable institution to which they might be sent, they were taken to the Kuk and left in custodial care. In those days, during the 1940s and early 1950s, there were no institutions undertaking the care and training of mentally handicapped children. As a result, some families who could no longer cope with their retarded children might simply dress them up tidily, take them to the cinema or even for a bus ride, and then leave them. The grown-ups would quietly slip away and abandon the child, knowing that the police would eventually find them and channel them into institutional care.

The Po Leung Kuk ran a primary school within its compound where all the children were sent every day. Among students were slow learners who, although promoted less frequently than the others, at least had somewhere to go each day. However, these young adults had nothing to do, and I felt strongly that something tangible should be done for them. First, I advised the matron to assign them to various sections of the Kuk so that they could learn simple housekeeping tasks. Some went to the nursery and soon learned how to change diapers and to feed the babies. A few were assigned to the kitchen, where they took care of simple, safe tasks within the limits of their capabilities. Later I advised the Kuk to employ a teacher for this group of special young adults. Kindly and sympathetic, this teacher took a keen personal interest in each girl. With encouragement, even those young women who initially could not even provide the Kuk with a name and address eventually regained their wits to do so. With this work-therapy and basic learning, which produced such positive results, the Kuk was eventually able to trace the parents of some of its charges. Through the Kuk it was possible for men to find eligible women to marry, so it was great news whenever one of the girls found a caring partner, married happily, and settled down to a normal life.

In the late 1950s the deputy director of the Education Department asked me to take two visitors from America, Mr and Mrs Sargent Shriver (relatives of the famous Kennedy clan of Hyannis Port, Massachusetts, that produced US President John F. Kennedy), to see some of our schools and social welfare institutions, including Queen's College and the Po Leung Kuk. Mr Shriver was then chairman of the Chicago Board of Education, and he and his wife were both very knowledgeable about social welfare problems. I took them to see a group of mentally retarded young women who had been picked up by the Royal Hong



Kong Police and who, because there was no other institution to which they could be directed, were housed in the Po Leung Kuk.

When Mrs Shriver saw these unfortunate women, she said that if they could be provided with the right kind of training, they could become self-supporting, or at least partially so. I agreed with her but explained that there was no such training available for them in Hong Kong nor any qualified teachers to carry out such a task. She then said that if I could find a college graduate who was genuinely interested in being trained to deal with this problem, she might be able to secure at least a partial scholarship from the Kennedy Foundation. The graduate could study mental retardation at the University of Illinois and later return to Hong Kong to train others to help handicapped people. I was delighted by the offer.

At first the idea met with typical bureaucratic resistance. When I reported the conversation to the deputy director, Mr L.G. Morgan, he reminded me that there were still not enough schools for normal children. Even if we did train a special teacher, we could not expect to spend public money to provide schools for the retarded, particularly since they "would be of little value to society." I argued that in the long run the scheme would be an economy, since if these unfortunate people were not taught to earn a living, they would become an increasing burden on the public coffers for the rest of their lives. My reasoning gained ground, but there was still the problem of finance, having been promised only half a scholarship. However, the Kennedy Foundation solved this by generously raising the offer to a full scholarship, and the Asia Foundation helped with a round-trip travel grant. The donors added to this when the candidate finished his training in 1961, so that he could make the return trip to Hong Kong via Europe in order to attend the Congress of the World Federation for Mental Health in Paris and also to visit various institutions in England. It was money well spent. After completing his training, our new Chinese social worker went on to instruct both Hong Kong teachers and other social workers on how to handle this difficult, specialised problem.

Meanwhile, the Mental Health Association of Hong Kong continued to do good work as a voluntary organisation by disseminating information through its monthly lectures. These were attended by workers from the three relevant government departments—Medical, Education, and Social Welfare—and from private institutions doing similar work, plus many interested members of the public. From the

beginning, I became an active member of the group's committee whenever I was in Hong Kong. I was chairman for four years, two in the early years and two nearer the time I left for America in 1967. Almost every year, the Hong Kong Teachers Association invited me to lecture at its annual conference, and I always chose a topic in the mental health field.

During this time, I often visited the Mental Hospital, as its superintendent, Dr P.M. Yap, was a good friend with whom I had always worked closely. One year, the president of the World Federation for Mental Health, Dr Frank Fremont Smith, and the director, Dr John R. Rees, informed Dr Yap that they would be visiting Hong Kong at the end of 1954 and asked us to set up an itinerary for them. We were fortunate to arrange an interesting four-day programme, with visits to various institutions such as the Po Leung Kuk and the Mental Hospital, which had by then moved to a new building at Castle Peak. The visitors attended or gave several lectures and had dinner at Idlewild as guests of the committee of the Mental Health Association. Father generously loaned the premises, and the guests were well cared for by his cook and houseboy. Before leaving Hong Kong, Dr Rees asked me if I would be willing to be nominated as a candidate for election to the executive board of the World Federation. They wanted someone from our geographical area, in particular an educator and preferably a woman. Dr Rees said it was not certain that I would be elected, but they wanted first to confirm my interest and secure my permission. He explained that they generally held two board meetings a year, one in London and the other somewhere in continental Europe. The Federation would pay for my flight and hotel expenses. It seemed a very generous offer.

At first I wondered if I was qualified to be on such an important board, but they allayed my fears. They understood that being a government servant, I would have to seek official permission. It was eventually granted by the director of the Education Department, with the proviso that I was responsible for my own expenses and would have to take time out of my casual leave entitlement or vacation leave. I agreed with these terms and informed the Federation. In due course I was elected and attended my first board meeting in London in early 1956. I considered it too expensive for the Federation to send me over for two meetings each year, so I asked for permission to be absent for the winter session. I was highly honoured to have been given an opportunity to learn from my senior colleagues on the board, who were all experts in

their respective fields: psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric social workers, educators, and others. Many of these knowledgeable people were semi-retired and came from all over Europe, the United States, and elsewhere. Besides the two people I met in Hong Kong, I recall being particularly impressed by Dr Margaret Mead, a world-renowned anthropologist, and Dr Kenneth Soddy, a psychiatrist who was also secretary to the board. Dr Soddy later became a good friend, and both he and Dr Mead helped me considerably.

The Federation meetings I attended were held in West Germany, Geneva, Barcelona, and the United Kingdom. One trip I made to West Berlin was especially memorable. After I got off the plane, I found that I was in East Berlin instead. Fortunately, the East German immigration officers realised that my travel agent in Hong Kong had made a mistake and allowed me to board a truck to get to the border. It dropped me off close by the border checkpoint in the divided city, and I walked swiftly through to the west and took a taxi to my destination. Invariably during these jaunts to Europe, when the conference was over I would spend a few days with my sister Grace, who lived in north London with her daughter Shirley. I would usually ask Grace to book theatre tickets for a couple of shows, which I always loved. When I could, I would meet some of my Chinatown friends from the 1930s for tea or dinner. It was gratifying to see that most of the young people had made good, and we were all happy to see each other again. On one occasion, I also spent a few days with my German friends, Dr Paul Geheeb, principal of the Ecole d'Humanite, and his wife Edith. Their school was an international coeducational institution in Switzerland that pioneered the new education school of thought. The Geheebes were like godparents to me, and my visits always gave me inspiration amidst the beautiful Swiss mountain scenery. I first met them in 1929 during the international New Education Fellowship conference in Copenhagen.

Among the committee members of the Mental Health Association of Hong Kong was Miss Elizabeth Rowe, who had been trained at the Tavistock Clinic in London. She happened to be in Hong Kong visiting her brother one year and successfully applied for an English teacher's post she saw in an advertisement. She was assigned to teach English at the Belilios Secondary School for Girls. Miss Rowe was quite knowledgeable about mental health matters, and after she joined the association, we appointed her as secretary. When she had served for five years and was due to take home leave in England, Miss Rowe intimated to me that she

might not return to Hong Kong. I was surprised and thought perhaps she might be getting married, but the reason was much more simple. Elizabeth had been well trained in mental health work but thought that the people in Hong Kong were not making full use of her talents in this field. Therefore she intended to seek a suitable position elsewhere. I immediately realised that we had an opportunity to employ her in the work for which she had been specially trained, a talent that Hong Kong sorely needed. Consequently, in my capacity as Senior Woman Education Officer, I recommended that she be offered a post in this line of work. I also pointed out that we desperately needed to improve our care for the various categories of handicapped children.

It was probably as a result of my long memorandum to the Education Department that Deputy Director Morgan sent for me to ask if we really did have a problem with such children in our schools. I explained that according to international statistics, every country has so many "problem children" per thousand. In view of Hong Kong's large school population, we were no exception. However, I wanted to produce some supporting facts and figures. Miss Rowe was free in the afternoons, so together we began to analyse the marks sheets submitted to the department by all government primary schools. According to the system then in operation, each year these primary schools had to promote all children to a higher class, irrespective of whether they had been able to pass the required annual examinations. The result sheets were marked in red where a child had failed a subject. We thus discovered that, year after year, some of the children's marks were almost all negative.

In addition to analysing these statistics, I also visited various government schools, including the one at Quarry Bay that catered to non-Chinese children such as those of "expatriate" civil servants. Problems existed there as well. When asked if her school made provision for children who could not make the grade, the headmistress proudly guided me to a class of young people who for various reasons could not keep pace with the regular curriculum. Some were the children of businessmen from Europe, whose mother tongue might be French, German, or even a Slavic language, but not English. Others simply could not keep up with normal studies and were evidently slow learners. Once I had collected sufficient facts, I wrote another memo to my superiors in the hope that I might convince them of the genuine need to establish a special schools section in the Education Department.

As a result, Mr Morgan discussed the matter with Miss Rowe and eventually decided that she should organise such a section. She then went off to England on extended leave and commenced her new assignment upon her return.

Within twenty years, Miss Rowe had a permanent comprehensive system of special schools and special classes within ordinary schools up and running. Most of these institutions, though, were run by private organisations and subsidised by the government. Each year she helped select staff to be sent to the United Kingdom for specialised training and drafted the necessary amendments to the Subsidy Code and other government legal documents consolidating the financial aspects of the system she had built up. Miss Rowe added considerably to the section's staff, who in turned trained other teachers. She also made the rounds to supervise and advise the schools and classes for which she was responsible. Hong Kong was indeed fortunate to have someone with the ability and determination to develop such a system for the mentally handicapped. However, judging from information I obtained from families with mentally handicapped or retarded children, it is still impossible to completely satisfy the needs of each and every individual.

In the autumn of 1950 I first read a missive issued by the Colonial Secretariat of the Hong Kong government stating that UNESCO was offering fellowships to senior government officers of UN member states. Eligible officers were either doing or about to undertake responsible work and could apply for a fellowship grant in their specific field of interest, naming their three countries of preference. Although I was tempted to apply at once, it seemed unlikely that I would secure a place. However, my two faithful assistants encouraged me to apply for an official recommendation. The new director of the Education Department, D.J.S. Crozier, had just assumed office. He explained that since he had recently applied for additional staff, he could hardly lose a senior member's services for six months or so. I naturally bowed to his judgment but asked if he could still forward my application so that I would have a stronger case if I applied at a later date. I applied a second time in February 1952 and then once more in the autumn that year. Persistence seemed to pay off. I was delighted when, just before Christmas, I heard that I had been accepted.

At the time, my daughter Junie was doing well at school in Hong Kong. After she had completed fourth grade at the True Light Primary

School, I decided to transfer her to one of the Anglo-Chinese grant-aided secondary schools for girls, which was definitely more suitable should she eventually choose to go overseas for higher education. Junie duly sat for the entrance examinations and qualified to enter the fifth grade at Ying Wah Girls' School. The headmistress, Miss Silcock, seeing that Junie was actually a year younger than the normal age for that class, tried to persuade me to let her repeat a year. I declined, as my daughter had made the grade, and I preferred to see her advance as quickly as possible on merit rather than age. That way she could tackle the system earlier at a junior level, and I could conserve whatever resources were at my disposal for her education at a later, higher level. The new school happened to be just next door to Idlewild, so Junie could even go home for lunch. Our amah looked after all her needs. By the time of our trip to London, she had spent almost three happy years at Ying Wah Girls' School.

When I heard that my UNESCO fellowship was about to materialise, I had to decide what to do about Junie, who was then almost 12 years old. I consulted my good friend Marie Clements, an educational psychologist at The University of Hong Kong who had previously given Junie an intelligence test that had proved quite positive and encouraging. She advised me to take my daughter to England with me, as the experience would do her good. Miss Clements said she had a good friend in England, Mrs Joan Hills, who might be able to help me during my stay there. Originally an infant school teacher, Joan had since married and was living in Brighton. Her daughter was the same age as Junie; she had a son who was a year older; and her husband taught mathematics at a nearby school. Miss Clements wrote to the family and to my great joy they replied, saying that Junie could live with them as a paying guest while I was in England.

We set sail on our great adventure aboard the SS Guangzhou in March 1953. The vessel was due to arrive in London in good time for the first of two conferences arranged by the Colonial Office for April 20 to 23. Aboard ship, Junie spent most of her spare time in the children's nursery, helping to look after the little children. Some of the older ones provided her with the chance to practice conversational English— which was particularly useful because, although she had already reached the first year of secondary school in Hong Kong, her spoken English was still weak.

When we arrived in London, I was glad to see my friends Dr and

Mrs Philip Lam, the Chinatown Chinese doctor and his Caucasian wife, who allowed me to use their northwest London home as my headquarters. It was an arrangement that lasted throughout the first three months of my UNESCO fellowship. The Lam's house also became Junie's home whenever she came up to London. They had a daughter, Jane, who was just a year or so younger than Junie. Jane, Junie, and the Hills' girl all had some great times together. Occasionally I would visit Brighton for the weekend and stay with the Hills, who became my lifelong friends. During subsequent decades, whenever I found myself in the United Kingdom, I would try to visit them at their south coast home.

The first Sunday after my arrival, I asked my host Dr Lam to accompany me to Chinatown in London's East End, around Limehouse and Pennyfields. It was here that I had helped found the Chung Wah Club for Sino-British children during my student days, when I had been working for my Ph.D and doing some voluntary social work. That had been all of 17 years earlier, in 1936. To my surprise and delight, when we went into some shops I was immediately recognised by some of the young people who by then had matured into adulthood. They had fond memories of the Club, which had been like a second home to many children and even had quarters for the warden and his family to live on the top floor. The original club had ceased to function by then, but the building was still standing relatively untouched by the German bomber blitzkrieg, which had entirely demolished a neighbouring street during World War II. Nevertheless, it was within an area earmarked for redevelopment by the London County Council (LCC).

I went to the LCC offices and asked to see the redevelopment plans. I found that the authorities were planning to place a street through our site at number 35. It was freehold property that my father had bought outright and donated to the Chung Wah Club. I therefore contacted Father's lawyers in London who had handled the original purchase of the building when I was Sir Robert's secretary in 1932 and asked them to negotiate the sale of the property to the LCC. As far as memory serves, we had bought it for 200 pounds sterling some twenty years previously, but with the depreciation of sterling and inflation the value of the property had soared, and the lawyers were able to sell to the LCC for four times that amount. We decided to plough the money back into the community in several ways.

Part of the proceeds were donated to the local public library in

East London to purchase some good books on China so that people, particularly the young, could learn more about their ethnic heritage. It would normally have been too costly for the library to buy such books from their general funds. Another small donation went to buy two tents for the Chinese Children's Club, which had been started by Mr and Mrs Oatley. Its members were passionately keen on camping. The remainder was earmarked for small grants to help secondary school students of Chinese descent who had earned scholarships to enter college but needed funds for supplementary expenses. We appointed a small committee to decide on the annual grants allocation.

Lady Selwyn-Clarke, the wife of the former director of Medical Services in Hong Kong, chaired this committee in perpetuity. A former Chinese Consul for Liverpool, Mr M.S. Loh, also remained with the group from beginning to end. He had stayed on in London so that his own two children could complete their education in England after Britain, years before, officially recognised the existence of the "New China" at the United Nations. Connie, one of the older children from East London who had made good and become Mrs Leslie Hoe, also joined the committee and stayed with it throughout. Connie knew the community well, so she screened the applicants, helped to determine the most deserving cases, and advised the committee on the amount of cash they might consider granting in each case. With the passing of the years, some committee members dropped out for one reason or another, so I would then invite someone else to fill the vacant place. Among the people so co-opted was my sister Grace's second husband, Mr John Gittins, a capable and dedicated teacher and headmaster of a London County special school for delicate children. The committee continued to discharge its responsibilities right up to the point where the fund was eventually exhausted. Whenever students received a grant, they would be advised by Connie Hoe to write me a short note of thanks and tell me a little about themselves. The letters I received from these young men and women made me thankful that we had undertaken the project, and grateful to those who saw it through over the decades.

When I finally set off on my UNESCO fellowship accompanied by Junie, we were fortunate that our visit to England corresponded with the coronation in 1953 of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, with all its attendant functions and activities throughout the country. Before we left Hong Kong, we were able to reserve two seats in one of the stands erected along the mall that leads directly to Buckingham Palace, which was a



prime viewing position. Behind the stands the organisers had conveniently built toilet and catering facilities, which were invaluable since we had to be there early that morning and to stay until about six o'clock in the evening. Afterwards it took several hours for the crowds to disperse, but we eventually made our way through the mass of joyful humanity to Victoria Station where we caught the Underground back to our "digs" in north London.

In many of the schools I later visited, it was evident that the Queen's coronation had served to promote the English love of tradition and the nation's affection for the royal family, which was almost universal in the years following World War II. There were photographs of the royal family and the crown jewels displayed in junior classrooms, while secondary school students would often be set to work on displays or special projects based on the monarchy or its associated institutions and traditions. In addition to watching the royal procession pass along the mall, the two of us managed to see the naval review at Spithead from the vessel Lord Warden; I also attended a garden party at Buckingham Palace with hundreds of other guests who graced the well-kept lawns that day. I was allowed to bring a guest, so I invited a young student from Hong Kong whose family I knew. We were, of course, given tickets for admission, which were to be shown and collected at the gathering. Those with decorations were decked out with miniatures for the semi-formal occasion, but this did not apply to me. I would not receive my OBE in Buckingham Palace until 1961, some eight years later. In 1953 Her Majesty the Queen was hardly more than a girl with a charming smile and demure manner as she wandered around the garden, stopping here and there to chat briefly with some of her guests. All the while, attendants circulated and offered guests cool drinks and the ubiquitous English afternoon tea snacks of neatly trimmed sandwiches and other delicacies. It was a friendly, simple gathering. The British royalty held these functions from time to time to extend hospitality and courtesy to a fairly large cross-section of the community deserving of recognition.

The first of two conferences organised by the Colonial Office tackled the education of women and girls, which coincided exactly with my new duties in Hong Kong as Senior Woman Education Officer tasked "with advising the Director of Education on Girls' Education and Women Staff." In my subsequent report I noted that about eighty delegates from other colonial territories were in attendance. There were also about

twenty expert consultants from the United Kingdom, many of whom I was fortunate to see again later in their own schools or offices. The second conference centred on voluntary work by and among women in colonial territories, and dealt mainly with social welfare and adult education. The Colonial Office's social welfare adviser gave an inspiring discourse on the partnership between voluntary organisations and the government. In my report to the Director, I pointed out that although my work in the Hong Kong Education Department was not too closely concerned with this subject, in my private capacity as a responsible member of many voluntary organisations I found the conference subject interesting and worthwhile.

Out of my thirteen weeks in the United Kingdom, I spent approximately half in and around London and the other half outside, with about a week each in Brighton, Manchester, the western counties, and the county of Kent. Our work in Hong Kong was similar to that conducted by the British education system's administrators and inspectors, so I was naturally keen to meet some of my counterparts, hear about their duties, and observe their work. At the first Colonial Office conference I met the Chief Inspector of Schools, Mrs Mæ—who was also in charge of primary schools—and two other staff inspectors. They were extremely helpful and established a pattern of cordial and spontaneous camaraderie that followed me throughout my stay and undoubtedly helped to simplify my task. During my visits to the various counties, I was frequently escorted by the staff inspectors to visit schools under their supervision. I was much impressed with the friendly cooperation and trust that existed between the inspectorate and the heads of schools in their jurisdiction.

At the Ministry of Education, I was encouraged to read an account of the functions and duties of inspectors, as laid down in the 1949 Parliamentary Report on Education. It stated that their duties could be said to fall under three headings: "eyes and ears" of the Ministry, "educational missionaries," and "watchdogs of finance." Inspectors could serve as cross-pollinators of good educational theory and practice; they could also offer advice, organise courses, and issue educational pamphlets for the guidance of teachers. However, all this was set out only in the form of suggestions for consideration by the English school teachers and in no way represented rigid policy.

Inspectors also had to serve on innumerable committees, councils, and boards and were often required to negotiate with other

government departments and even with people in industry and commerce if they were in charge of technical education. In their capacity as "watchdogs," inspectors had to see that public money was well spent. For this purpose, they had to perform both full inspections and routine inspections. A full inspection meant that the inspector in charge had to arrange for a panel of suitable composition and character to go with him to the school for a few days to obtain a general picture of the school from various aspects. Teaching methodology was reported upon subject by subject, and specialist inspectors were often called upon to comment upon their own particular field. This process was similar to the full inspections we were regularly called upon to conduct in Hong Kong schools, for which I sometimes had to act as "reporting" inspector. That 1949 Parliamentary Report contained some excellent advice for educators, and even now it is worth quoting. One particular section states:

In the classroom, an inspector often hears a lesson through, sitting at the back of the room; sometimes he may wish to question the class or hear some of the pupils read aloud. He may examine the syllabus, the record of work done, or the pupils' exercise books. Sometimes he may ask the pupils to write a piece of English, provide a written answer to some questions, or complete some examples in arithmetic.

There is no set formula and consequently there is an infinite variety of method. He [the inspector] is a visitor to the school, doing his work in the way that seems best to him; looking more for positive merits than for inevitable defects; ready to offer constructive criticism and help on the basis of what he finds going on and out of the experience he has been fortunate enough to gain through his continual contact with schools.

At the two London conferences, I was able to interview some of the people in charge of various national educational organisations. These included members of the then notoriously partisan London County Council. Naturally I visited the Institute of Education, which trains teachers for the whole country and was where I had to register my own doctorate. Once I settled down to work, I found that London was a fertile ground in which to make a start, because it had such a diversity of teaching institutions for me to study. At that time, the concept of comprehensive schools was new and of particular interest since such institutions admitted all students who had taken their "eleven-plus" examinations.

They offered a wide variety of classes in an attempt to satisfy the needs of each and every student category. In later years, the British exam system—which identified students as "academic" or "technical" candidates for the whole of their future education after a single examination—was roundly castigated as being biased. It did not take into consideration the difference between boys and girls who might reach puberty at very different intervals, which could affect their performance and maturity in the examination process. The "11-plus" was viewed by many as a political expedient to relieve the growing pressure of burgeoning population growth on "quality" places at publicly funded schools.

Highly regarded at the time were the independent grammar schools which were operated by private organisations instead of local government authorities. Among those I visited were the King Alfred School for Boys and St Paul's Girls' School. Both offered a good academic curriculum that prepared students for university if they stayed on until they were 18. Unfortunately many bright pupils who could not afford to do so were destined to leave school and go to work at age 16 after completing "matriculation," now commonly referred to as the General Certificate of Education. At the time the minimum school leaving age was 15. In the field of further education, I managed to visit the College for Garment Trades, a College for Distributive Trades, two technical colleges, and the Hampstead Garden City Institute. Many national organisations, foundations, and institutes had head offices in London, so I was able to call on them between visits to the provinces. In addition, I made a special effort to study teaching facilities for the handicapped.

Everywhere I went, I found people ready and willing to answer my many questions and was usually promised future assistance should it be needed. I felt that I was not only being aided in my work but also gaining friends, not only for myself but also for Hong Kong and the Chinese people. I was particularly happy whenever I was able to build on the contacts I had made back in my student days in Hong Kong or the United Kingdom, some of whom had remained in contact with me for more than a quarter-century. It all worked towards international understanding, and it gave me great satisfaction to once again help promote this ideal. At all the local education authorities I visited, I was hosted by education officers or their subordinates who generally treated me as a colleague and drove or escorted me to visit their schools.

I arranged to begin my school visits outside London by first going

to Brighton for about a week. This was partly because it was relatively nearby and partly because my daughter Junie was staying there with the Hills family. I went back there again in July, just before I left England to spend the remainder of my fellowship in America and Japan conducting more professional visits. Whenever I stayed with the Hills their son John, who was about 14 years old, would give up his room for the duration of my visit, which was very generous. Because of the electric express train to and from London, which took a little over one hour for the journey, I was often able to pop down to Brighton for the weekend. On those occasions I could enjoy a little of the Hills' family life, which I appreciated immensely.

Brighton provided me with a wide spectrum of educational institutions to study. I visited schools at each educational level, starting with a secondary modern establishment. This type of school had by that time become the norm for young people who would not usually become academically acceptable for university entrance; they had joined the exam "stream" with those whose lot would be to end up in manual jobs. I also saw several grammar schools that catered to either girls or boys. These were naturally aimed at preparing students for tertiary education. Adding to the variety was a vast array of schools, institutes, or colleges aiming at specific trades or vocations. These included the Teachers' Training College; a Nursery Nursing College for those who wanted to specialise in work with very young children; a technical college; and a technical institute. I also visited a College of Arts and Crafts.

During those first few days in Brighton I visited the Varndean Girls' School, a secondary school run by the City of Brighton that had accepted my daughter for a short term. Junie had fit quite well into the school routine and was in a class of girls her own age. She was dressed in the regular school uniform, but without the school badge because she was not a regular Varndean student. What did help her was being assigned to the same class as Jane Hills, whose bedroom she shared and who had become her bosom pal. If Junie did not clearly understand what was expected of her, or perhaps if she needed some advice on homework, she always turned to Jane for help. Originally I had planned to send Junie back to Hong Kong before I left England to visit the United States. However, so well did she settle down to life in Brighton that after the first month the Hills were keen for her to remain with them while I went off on my travels. They thought it would be better to let Junie finish

her term at Varndean, sit for the end-of-term examinations, and then attend a Girl Guide camp with Jane. The Hills undertook to "post her back to Hong Kong" at the end of that time instead of my doing so before I left for the United States. My family and our amah in Hong Kong would receive her at that end. It sounded like a sensible idea, so I accepted their suggestion and planned accordingly.

I returned to Brighton again in early July before leaving the United Kingdom and revisited Varndean Girls' School to bid farewell to the headmistress and to thank her. I also attended a function at Vardean Boys' School where Mr Hills was senior maths teacher and his son John was a student in one of the upper forms. Junie seemed to have fitted in well, generally adjusting to her environment and also coping with the demands of the British educational system. She had sat for the end-of-term examinations and could have been promoted to the next class along with her classmates had she been staying longer in England. Not that I had any intention of letting her do so, because apart from my natural reluctance to leave her to her own devices for longer than necessary, I felt that she should first complete her secondary education in Hong Kong. This would enable her to absorb as much Chinese culture as possible and at the same time explored foreign ways and thoughts. A couple of years later she sat and passed the Hong Kong School Leaving Certificate Examination and passed the Chinese language and Chinese history papers as well.

After studying education in Brighton, my next stop was Manchester. Here the city education officer was Mr Norman Fisher, who had previously visited Hong Kong to advise on educational finance. He greeted me as an old friend, so I was able to settle down quickly to work with the aid of his staff, particularly the inspectors. My school visits continued and I soon began to learn how my new colleagues tackled their work, viewed the fundamentals, and solved any problems with which they were faced. The chief accountant was especially helpful and took great pains to explain how he prepared his estimates. Part of the process was to take draft estimates of expenditure from department heads and then find means of reducing the cost in various ways before the figures were included in his annual budget submission to the Ministry of Education in October. It is never an easy task to improve educational services by trying to satisfy the needs of students and the demands of parents and educators, while at the same time keeping within budgetary constraints. Often the issue became quite heated and

extremely political.

About the time of my visit Manchester, a northern industrial city, was in the throes of a battle royal over the shortfall of finance for its Education Department. The powers-that-be had cut 396,000 pounds sterling for that year's educational allotment, and something had to give. At first they intended to discontinue the city's nursery schools service, which was not a statutory requirement. As a result, thousands of parents demonstrated and solicited so much support and publicity that eventually cuts were made in other areas. It was a no-win situation for those in power, and when Manchester held its local elections, the voting public expressed its feelings over proposed administrative cuts in any of city's public services. The incumbent Conservative Party was voted out of office and replaced by a Labour council. It was interesting to see the English system of local government at work.

It was an extremely busy period of my life. The Manchester experience passed all too quickly, and I found myself heading to the southwest of the country to visit a number of well-known schools and other educational institutions. These included Knowles and Portway Secondary Modern Schools, both situated in the old west coast port of Bristol in the estuary of the River Severn, and the Westonbirt School in nearby Tetbury. I also revisited Dartington Hall School in Totnes, Devonshire, which I had seen and liked in my postgraduate student days and had recommended to my two nieces, Daphne and Wendy Yeo, the children of my sister Florence. I had also recommended a similar school for boys, King's College at Taunton, to Florence for her son Dick, who became Dr Richard Yeo in later years. When I revisited King's in 1953, the school authorities lined up eight young men from Hong Kong who were there as students—including Dick.

Next in my busy schedule was some fieldwork in the County of Kent just outside London, where the senior inspector was Prof Wilfred Vickers, my old mentor and first guide in the field of education. Under his feet I had sat in 1921 at University of Hong Kong, where he had spent just that one year. When I was working for my Ph.D in London, I had requested that the Board of Education allow me to serve an apprenticeship under him for a fortnight. The fellowship thus enabled me to do a week's refresher course that was interesting and enjoyable in all ways. In addition to being taken to visit schools and other educational institutions, I was actually allowed to be present when the Secondary Committee held its regular meeting. The committee consisted of local

laymen and a number of experts who had been co-opted to help with their specialist knowledge. The committee toiled through the long agenda, item by item, in a thoroughly professional manner—either passing each proposal without comment or discussing them carefully, subjectively or objectively, until they were satisfied. This was an excellent example of how a committee could achieve positive action and not become an unproductive debating society, as often happens in any field or profession.

While in Kent I attended an architects' conference, which was relevant to my work since we school inspectors were often called upon to make suggestions on building and zoning plans. Here I saw an excellent exhibition of plans and models of schools built in recent years and obtained interesting comparisons of the relative space devoted to school facilities in the United Kingdom, such as classrooms, offices, corridors, gymnasiums, and so on. I always collected whatever information I could wherever I went, whether the literature was free or I had to purchase it. I had all the material sent back to the Education Department in Hong Kong, where I donated it to the departmental library.

Before I left Britain the Director of the British Council, who had been looking after the arrangements of my programme on behalf of UNESCO, allowed about a week for me to write up my "Partial Report." He arranged to have the draft typed for me while my former mathematics teacher at University of Hong Kong, Prof Walter Brown, gave me a well-earned rest by driving me around the Scottish Highlands for the weekend. Among other things, we visited friends in Edinburgh and my married cousin in Perth. This report carried the rather long-winded title: "Educational Administration in England, 13th April to 12th July, 1953—Partial Report on a UNESCO Fellowship in Educational Administration in the UK, USA, Japan, and the Philippines, April to October, 1953." It was first submitted to UNESCO, then a copy was sent to Mr Crozier, the head of my department in Hong Kong who took a personal interest in my fellowship. This first report came to 23 pages of single-spaced foolscap typing; altogether the second section filled another 59 pages and was not written until after I returned to Hong Kong. In addition, there were more than 20 pages of tabulated lists of schools, institutions, or other organisations I visited, along with dates, persons in charge, and a potted history on each section of England visited.



In England alone I had visited about one hundred different organisations of one kind or another, including infant or junior schools and departments; secondary modern, technical, grammar, comprehensive, and independent schools; special schools; further education, technical, and trade colleges; teacher training institutions; child guidance and mental health services; school health services; youth employment services; national education authorities; local education authorities; and a few specialised institutes and foundations. This was done all within the space of thirteen weeks, which not only illustrates how busy I had been but also attests to the considerable assistance I had been given by all the various officials, colleagues, and friends I met during my stay. The work I did in America, Japan, and the Philippines was organised differently mainly because the systems of administration and control, as well as the types of school, differed from country to country, as did the availability of resources. However, the basic objectives were the same in each place, and I believe the "Final Report" provided some highly useful information to fellow educators and to those interested in the workings of our profession.

On arriving back in Hong Kong, I presented the Education Department with most of the books I had gathered throughout the trip in the hope that they might be of interest to my colleagues or others who might wish to access them. At the director's behest, I wrote another eleven-page report summarising my recommendations. Those reports kept me, the typist at the British Council in London, and my secretary at the Education Department in Hong Kong busy for quite a while. I believed then and still do that the work I did for my UNESCO fellowship was of vital importance and contributed to improving the vast panorama of educational horizons that can be put before students of all ages from all nations. Therefore it is probably not surprising that I often wondered, and still do, how many people ever looked at the many copies of the full report and related literature that I worked so diligently to produce with the support of so many interested and helpful people.

## Tai Shing School

**W**hen I first joined the Hong Kong Education Department the standard retirement age for a single woman officer was 50. I started with the department in May 1948 when I was already 43, and my first appointment was for a period of three years. When that time had elapsed, the department asked me to stay on. Soon afterwards, the retirement age for women was stretched to 55, with the right to apply for an extension. Usually employees would apply for a year's extension at a time until they had obtained a total of five extra years, all subject to government approval of course. When I reached 55 my colleague, Mr K.H. Yuen, advised me to apply outright for five more years, which the government promptly cut down to two. I did not ask to stay on after that. This was partly because my daughter was then a student in England, where I too wanted to go for some further training in mental health work. Although I had always been deeply interested in that subject, I had never undergone specific training in the field. Consequently, I retired when I was 57 years old. I was able to leave the job in July 1961, a little earlier than the contract date because I had some leave owed to me.

Every year the department usually gave a banquet in honour of all those who were retiring. On the evening that my farewell was to be commemorated, we were moving into the banquet hall when the secretary to the Director leaned towards me and whispered: "Do you know they are giving you an OBE?" I had never dreamt of ever receiving such an award, so I was, to say the least, pleasantly surprised. Although I was then not too familiar with this system of awards, I knew that the MBE was the first rank in the scale of Officers of the Order of

the British Empire, whereby the recipient is appointed a Member. The next rank is that of Officer, hence the designation OBE. After that comes the rank of Commander (CBE), and finally Knight (KBE)—or, if the recipient is a woman, she becomes a Dame.

Of course, my family had already received signal honours from the Crown. Father was first awarded a Knight Bachelor by King George V in 1915. After that he was called Sir Robert Ho Tung. My eldest sister Vic became an MBE, and her husband M.K. was knighted as Sir Man Kam Lo. Later, in 1955 Father received a second knighthood, this time becoming a KBE or Knight of the Order of the British Empire. We were told that this was a higher rank than his first knighthood. It was probably the highest award that could have been given to a person who had not been a senior government official. Before I left Hong Kong, I was asked whether I wished to have the OBE presented to me by His Excellency the Governor, in Hong Kong, or to go to Buckingham Palace and receive it from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. As I had already made plans to go to England, I naturally decided on the second alternative.

To my relief, when the time came for me to receive the award, I was allowed to take two guests to accompany me to the palace. I chose my sister Grace and my daughter. At Buckingham Palace all those who were to be decorated sat in the centre of a small reception room, above which was a balcony where guests could obtain a good view of the proceedings. The Queen was seated on an elegant but simple chair placed on a dais about several steps higher than floor level. When a recipient's name was called out, he or she would approach the dais to receive the award. When my turn came, as the Queen leaned forward to place the red ribbon over my neck, I asked her softly if she remembered giving my father his award in 1955. I reminded her that he had been in a wheelchair at the time. She assured me that she had not forgotten.

Once I had settled into my new home, I registered for the North London Child Guidance Training Centre, which instructs educational psychologists and psychiatric social workers for various child guidance clinics in the United Kingdom. I was taking the course mainly because it interested me and did not have a clinic or local authority as a sponsor. This meant that although I was allowed to participate in all aspects of the training, I had to find my own cases to study. Vic's daughter Vera was living in London, so I "borrowed" her eldest son, Geoffrey Hui, to undergo my various tests. He was a bright lad and scored quite highly. I

even tried the Rorschach ink blot test on him, which produced some interesting results. Geoffrey later became a successful lawyer in Hong Kong and subsequently told me that when he had grown older he had taken the trouble to find out more about the test and the results he achieved. For some time, an expert from the Tavistock Clinic had been running a course in which she gave students from several training centres a weekly lecture about the Rorschach tests. This consisted of test sheets marked with a large ink blot. The blots are all different, and the subject being tested attempts to describe what each blot represents. Different subjects visualise the blots to represent different things. From their answers, the tester should be able to draw certain conclusions regarding the subject's psychological profile.

The educational psychologist in charge of our training, Dr Nora Gibbs, suggested that if I was interested, I could go to the Hospital for Nervous Diseases for Children to watch her test severely mentally handicapped children. Naturally I jumped at the opportunity and went on several occasions. I was also fortunate in that my friend Dr Kenneth Soddy, who had been secretary of the World Federation for Mental Health, was a practicing child psychiatrist and conducted two case studies every Monday afternoon. Thus I was able to join his students at these seminars, who were mainly psychiatrists and psychologists in training. We would all be seated in an adjoining room but could see and hear everything that went on in the testing room through a one-way mirror system and strategically placed microphones. Dr Soddy would first test a child and then interview its mother, after which he would repeat the procedure with the second child and its parent. Finally, when his clients had left, he would discuss the cases with us over a cup of tea. The seminars were most interesting, and I was grateful to Dr Soddy for allowing me to gain such a valuable insight into the procedure. Some days I would fit in an additional lecture at the Institute of Education where Prof Oakeshot, the woman professor who had taught Grace and John some years earlier, still ran a course on teaching maladjusted children. When time allowed, I was able to make the occasional visit to some special institution or study some particularly interesting work that had been recommended by one of my advisers.

For example, on one occasion I travelled to the west of England to see a hospital run by a psychiatrist, Dr Ginsburg. The local authority there often sent him mentally retarded prisoners, many of whom would be released again after a few months. As most of these prisoners were

illiterate, he used the time to teach them to read a little. In his opinion it was not much use teaching them to read from children's books, which usually began with sentences such as "the cat sat on the mat." So he developed his own list of essential words and phrases that would be more useful to adult retarded prisoners in real life situations. Apart from simple words, it was important that they recognised public signs such as "no smoking" or traffic signs such as "stop" and "give way." Dr Ginsburg and his staff would continuously remind patients that the words and expressions could help them through life. I later found that similar words and phrases were useful for some of my Chinese students who were learning English as a second language in San Diego, my second home after I retired.

Since I was in Europe, I naturally wanted to make good use of the opportunity to travel on the continent. Therefore when my daughter was due a vacation, we arranged to go to Europe for a short holiday. That first winter we went to the Austrian Alps, where Junie learned how to ski. During the mid-1930s when I was working on my Ph.D thesis, I had two Chinese wards who had been taken to the United Kingdom by their father, General Tsai Ting-kai. He insisted that I act as their guardian. I had originally met the general while I was on the Faculty at Lingnan University. I took the two young men with us on that holiday in the Alps, and they too became proficient on skis. While the three of them boldly challenged the mountainsides, I could only ski on the level or very gentle slopes. It was the winter of 1961, and I was then in my mid-50s. My brother-in-law, Dr K.C. Yeo, advised me not to attempt to ski at all, so I wrote to my old friend Dr Oscar Bock in Vienna, who had taught me free of charge the little German I knew. Fortunately, Oscar also wanted to have a vacation, so we had a good time there walking in the fresh, snowy atmosphere and chatting about every topic under the sun of mutual interest.

Come spring, I took Junie and two other young ladies for a trip to the north of England and south of Scotland. First I had to interview someone professionally in Aberdeen, then all four of us boarded a train to begin our adventures. However, I made a diversion in order to visit my good friends such as Prof and Mrs Simpson, formerly of the English Department of The University of Hong Kong, but then living in the picturesque little Scottish village of Aberfeldy. My three young companions took the train directly from Aberdeen to Edinburgh, where I intended to meet them later.

Prof Simpson met my train at the village station and drove me to his home. It was good to see him and his wife again, and that evening over dinner the three of us caught up on all the news. Afterwards, as I was getting ready for bed, I slipped in the bathroom and fractured my wrist. My hosts called the village doctor, who diagnosed a fracture. Needless to say, this was an unwanted diversion. The doctor took me to an orthopaedic hospital some miles away, even though I tried to talk him out of it. I had arranged to take certain trains to another small town the next day, where I was due to have dinner and stay the night. Then I would head for Edinburgh the day after that. I kept saying that I had to send two wires announcing that I could not make it. Nobody would listen to me, perhaps because the doctor had given me a heavy sedative and I became quite drowsy. I was only vaguely aware of arriving at the hospital, and soon thereafter I was being operated upon. The Simpsons came to collect me at about 11 o'clock the following morning and were determined that my accident should not spoil my holiday. So I was discharged from hospital, taken out for lunch, and then put on a train to keep my appointment with the other family. My next host was Dr Ian Wang, eldest son of Prof C.Y. Wang, former head of the HKU Pathology Department. He had married a Scottish girl, and they had two lovely bright boys. Indeed the Wangs and our family were great friends, and they had planned a dinner for me. It was a splendid reunion and, as arranged, I spent the night with some other friends. I was able to keep to my plans the following day and joined the three girls in Edinburgh.

Once in the Scottish capital, I felt I had better go to the Royal Free Hospital for a check-up, so one of the girls, Maureen, escorted me there. The other two young ladies spent the day sightseeing. The next day, all of us went from Edinburgh to the Lake District for a couple of days, as I felt it would be good for Junie to see that famous part of England. When we returned to London, I went to the University College Hospital to get another opinion on my wrist and arrange whatever follow-up treatment I required. The hospital was very attentive, but with the national health system keeping the overworked staff busy in the extreme and my own heavy schedule of lectures, clinics, and other activities, it was not easy for me to book regular appointments for continuous treatment. When my hand was taken out of the plaster cast it was quite painful and difficult to use. I went to Lewis's medical bookstore nearby and asked if they had a good book that might help me. I bought a volume called *Exercises in Injuries*. It was most helpful and

eventually my wrist regained full mobility, with no pain whatever, although to this day it still looks a little crooked.

After the extremely bitter winter of 1961, I vowed not to spend another such season in the United Kingdom. The older houses, badly insulated and primitively heated, were particularly difficult to keep warm. I decided to find a job in Hong Kong after the summer was over and thought of my former student, Dr Ho Chung-chung. She was then principal of the True Light Middle School in Hong Kong. I had always regarded her as my personal education consultant and knew that she ran a good school. Therefore, I wrote to her offering to work on her staff. Dr Ho was often in need of English teachers, as the best ones were frequently lured away by higher salaries and better conditions in government or grant-aided schools. The salary scale in her school was not high, but I did not mind because I knew I would enjoy working with her, the staff, and the students. I had attended many functions at the school and was always highly impressed by the wonderful cooperative spirit that existed there.

I offered to teach English and also help with some of the administrative work. Dr Ho wrote back saying that she would welcome me "with open arms." Because September can be so unbearably hot in Hong Kong, I asked her to delay the start of my appointment until October. I felt that there was sufficient mutual understanding between us for her to approve my request. Indeed she willingly consented and found a student from The University of Hong Kong to act as my substitute for a month, as varsity classes did not start until October. I remember that I arrived in Hong Kong on September 30, 1962, and Dr Ho was there to meet me at the airport. The next morning I attended school assembly and she wasted no time in introducing me to her girls as their "grandmother teacher" ("Si Paw")—for she had, indeed, been a former student of mine. My students were the Senior IIB class of just over 40 girls, aged about 14, most of whom were extremely keen to learn. The school had three parallel classes, and mine was the middle section. I taught a 50-minute lesson six days a week, and the girls and I enjoyed each other very much. I tried to improve their spoken and written English as best I could and carefully corrected their papers. We maintained such a warm and friendly relationship even after I left the school that some of them still keep in close touch with me.

Just before I left England, soon after I had promised to teach at

True Light, I received a letter from the Confucian Academy telling me that their new school was almost ready. Although they had heard that I had accepted an appointment from True Light Middle School, they wanted to invite me to become the first principal of their new Tai Shing School. They said they would wait for me, but I replied that I did not want to keep them waiting. When I reached Hong Kong, I realised that the new school building was not yet ready and would not be able to start functioning until the following summer. However, they wanted to book me beforehand, so as to be sure that I would begin as principal the following year. They had not forgotten the time, years before, when the former principal, the venerable Lo Sheung Fu, and several of his colleagues on the board of the Confucian Academy had consulted me about rebuilding their Tai Shing Primary School in Caine Road. I had referred them to my colleague in charge of granting land and making the new school a subsidised one. With the land the government had given them in the Wong Tai Sin Resettlement Estate, they had built a lovely new school.

Naturally, I was flattered at being asked to head the new school, but at first I hesitated to accept such a heavy responsibility. Although I had observed and evaluated many school principals during my career, I had never before been one, and I was not sure that I would be able to do the job successfully. Finally I consulted Dr Ho, who I knew would give me sound advice. As was her nature, she put my interests before her own needs and explained that as much as she wanted me to stay, the other job had more opportunity for me to develop my educational ideas. She therefore advised me to take it. As I could continue to work within the True Light environment for the rest of the academic year, I accepted the Confucian Academy post.

Meanwhile, I was exceedingly happy with my life and work at True Light because, although the salary was understandably low, Dr Ho really treated me as her "venerable teacher." I maintained a friendly relationship with my fellow teachers and joined their staff association, which held regular, interesting meetings. I had helped Dr Ho establish her Parent-Teacher Association when I was one of the parents, and it too became a flourishing organisation. Dr Ho and I had both been founding members of the Mental Health Association of Hong Kong. She was so interested in the subject that she asked me to help set up a child guidance service for her True Light Schools. These consisted of a secondary school, a primary school, and a kindergarten on the Tai Hang



Road site where I worked. There was also another primary school with kindergarten on the Caine Road site, where my own daughter had been a student from 1946 to 1950. Each section had its head teacher, while Dr Ho was principal over all. In total, there were well over 1,000 children under their care. I did what I could, though for that first year not too many students were referred to me by the heads of the various sections. For each case I gave the student one or more tests of which Dr Ho already had a reasonable supply. I discussed each one and how to help the student with the principal and others concerned. Dr Ho also provided me some privacy by partitioning off a small section of the school library with bookcases so that I could have a quiet office to myself, an essential ingredient for guidance work.

True Light had a good system where the class teacher visited the home of every student who seemed to have a problem. I thought this was an excellent technique and volunteered to go along with the class teacher when she visited some of the students we were teaching. I was impressed with the usefulness of this procedure, which invariably helped us obtain a clearer picture of the student's family background so that the teacher could better help the child. I am still in touch with one of the families we visited those many years ago. In addition, Dr Ho had me attend all the staff administrative meetings, that she held fairly frequently with the various heads of departments from her group of schools. Her school was exceedingly well organised, and I learned much from these meetings. Quite unexpectedly, all this experience proved very useful the following year when I started with my new school. In this way Dr Ho became my mentor in school administration, a subject in which I had never taken any courses.

Before my return to Hong Kong I had asked Dr Ho to lease me one of the little flatlets that the new Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Hostel had built in Bonham Road, near Idlewild. My amah, Hing Jeh, had waited for me all year while I was in England and would not take on any other permanent job. She was quite disappointed when I told her that I did not have any accommodation available for her. However, she asked me to bring my laundry to school a couple of times a week where she would pick it up and take it home to wash for me. In those days Hong Kong had few washing machines. My flatlet had a small sitz bath, but during those years the territory's reservoirs were insufficient to cope with the growing population's demand for water, so there were severe water restrictions. We only had

four hours of running water every fourth day, and people had to plan their lives in accordance with this schedule. My sitz bath had to be used carefully. As soon as the hour arrived for the water to come on, I had to clean up the tub, have a quick bath, thoroughly clean the bathtub again, and then use it to store water for other household uses for the next four days. Of course, people used a number of different ways to store water; many bought new dustbins and other large, cheap containers to act as household mini-reservoirs.

This state of affairs continued in Hong Kong right into the early 1980s, when the territory began to import sufficient water from the mainland for its needs. All the same, we managed and were thankful that we were so much better off than those people who lived in the tenement cubicles or even worse housing facilities. Many of them had to stand in long queues near the street mains where they took their turn filling up buckets or other containers when the water was turned on. Those who lived in squatter huts up on the mountainsides on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon were perhaps worst off. There, the water had to be carried from public standpipes up the unpaved paths that ran between the terraced shanties and shacks that often ranged far up the hillsides. Sometimes two old people or a couple of children would have to share the burden of a bucket of water between them as they dragged it up the mountain to their simple home. I am thankful to add that by the end of the 1980s, such conditions had become just a memory for those old enough to have experienced them.

Although I had many interesting professional experiences during my career, without doubt my most satisfying was as principal at the Confucian Tai Shing School in Kowloon. I was especially interested in this particular school, because I had the good fortune to be associated with it, albeit in a small way, from its rebirth as a government-subsidised establishment. Since it was replacing a primary school on Caine Road, the Hong Kong government originally expected the Confucian Academy to become just another primary school and budgeted its subsidy accordingly. However, members of the Academy heard that the government was even more keen to have nonprofit organisations build secondary schools. Therefore they decided to change the project into a secondary school instead of simply replacing the old primary institution. The government was positive and even persuaded the school board to include both types of teaching in the new school. As a result, the new

building ended up being five stories high. As I said earlier, it was built to accommodate a full-day secondary school and three primary schools—morning, afternoon and evening. The ground floor encompassed a large assembly hall, a sheltered playground, as well as a small, open playground area in the centre of the building. These facilities were shared by all four schools.

The secondary school classrooms, laboratories, teachers' rooms, and the principal's office were all on the fourth and fifth floors of the building. On those floors we also had a domestic science room for needlework. It was the only room available for this type of activity, and we were not allowed to teach cooking in the same room, even at different times of the week. I chose needlework because I thought the girls could learn cooking by themselves. Because of the shortage of accommodation, we also had two laboratories for the three sciences. The principal headed the secondary school, with its ten classrooms for a two-stream secondary Anglo-Chinese establishment. All subjects, with the exception of Chinese language and history, were taught in English.

On the second and third floors of the building were the primary school classrooms and offices for head teachers and teachers. A fair-sized school library, a visual aids room, and handicraft room were all shared by the primary and secondary students. Each primary school had the use of the twelve classrooms and had its own headmaster or headmistress. The first school classes began at 8 am and ran to 1 pm; the second shift then took over at 1:30 pm and continued until 6:30 pm. Six of these same classrooms were again used from 7 pm to 9 pm for the evening school, which was also at primary school level and had its own head teacher. This school catered to those who had not been able to complete their primary education and was similar to an adult education facility in the United States. Many of these evening pupils were teenage factory workers who worked on home industries in order to help with the family finances. At that time it was quite common for factories to farm out labour-intensive work for families to complete at home. This might involve simple assembly tasks, such as sewing garments made on the machines or inserting zippers that were paid for by the piece when returned. Other adolescents, especially girls, had to stay at home to look after their younger siblings while both parents went out to work. Some years later, the Hong Kong government was able to enforce compulsory, free primary and junior middle education, so that there is hardly any need nowadays to "double up" these primary schools as evening schools.

As well as being principal of the secondary school, I was also liaison officer between the three primary schools and the Education Department. I asked to be their principal also, at least nominally, since I was already acting in that capacity. I am glad to say that the three head teachers of the primary schools and I cooperated well with each other. Quite often I stayed late working in my office after evening school had begun. The headmasters and headmistresses knew they could easily get in touch with me whenever they needed to. They were all capable of dealing with their own problems and had usually done all the necessary groundwork. Mostly all they needed from me was to look through the documentation and then sign on the dotted line.

Important to the organisation was our school council (or board) headed by the supervisor, W.T. Wong, who was also supervisor of a number of other Confucian and Buddhist schools. In 1963 Mr Lo Sheung-fu was superintendent of the Confucian Academy, which had of course sponsored both the former small Tai Shing School and our beautiful new school. Old Mr Lo had been my own principal when I was a student at his Girls' School in Hong Kong before World War II. In addition to supervising the school facilities, the Academy also held Sunday morning lectures on various Confucian topics. It was one of the two organisations responsible for the preservation of Confucian traditions. After the war, this function was discontinued for a while, but soon after my own retirement, the Academy recommenced these public lectures, holding the meetings in our beautiful and spacious school assembly hall.

When the summer holidays of 1963 began, the new school building was not nearly ready, although we were assured that it would be completed in time for the new term. Fortunately, we were able to borrow premises from other schools so that we could work at the important tasks of putting together a group of teachers and selecting prospective students. In order to hire suitable teachers, we first advertised in the local newspapers. As we had four schools for which to find teachers, we held a couple of selection board meetings. Mr Wong, a few of his colleagues on the school council, and I borrowed a little office in a "friendly" school and interviewed each candidate thoroughly. There were many applicants, so we could afford to be selective. Mr Wong and his colleagues allowed me the power of final approval and would inform me of any additional information that had come to hand about a candidate before we actually carried out the job

interview.

There was one particular candidate who comes to mind. Interviews were due to take place on a Saturday morning, weeks before school actually started. A recent application had been made by a Ms Lee. I studied it carefully the previous day, because the candidate seemed to have good qualifications. She had taught at a well-run coeducational, grant-aided secondary school in Hong Kong. Her degree from The University of Hong Kong enabled her to teach English, geography, and other relevant subjects. I decided to include Ms Lee in the following day's interviews, but there was no time to mail her a letter asking her to attend the selection board. Therefore I decided to immediately deliver it by hand to her home on a terrace in Caine Road. It was late afternoon by the time I arrived. I knocked at the door and rang the doorbell. A young woman opened the latch of a little window on the door and peered out. "Does Ms Lee Bik-wah live here?" I asked. "Yes." She replied. "Will you please give this letter to her?" I said, as I proffered the envelope. "Yes, I will," she said, as she took the letter through the window.

I told the girl to be sure and remind Ms Lee to come early the next day, as I had put her at the beginning of my list of people to interview. As it turned out, the next day I waited and waited but did not see her arrive. Unbeknownst to me the person in charge of the interview system was very strict. Because Ms Lee's application had been the last to arrive, she had put it at the end of her list of candidates. While the other candidates' interviews were being conducted, I continuously reminded the board that I had someone coming whom I definitely considered suitable for a teaching post. I expressed the opinion that we should not fill up all the places until she had been interviewed. Finally she entered the room, and after we interviewed her all the board members agreed that she had a suitable personality. This young teacher was Mrs Chan Lee Bik-wah. She did indeed prove to be an excellent teacher, stayed with the school for many years, and for six of them was my assistant principal. It was many years later that she confessed to me that she was actually the same person who had spoken to me through the window at the front door. She had not been properly dressed at the time and had not wanted me to see her with untidy hair, for fear that it would spoil her chance of obtaining employment with the school.

We had accommodation for only ten classes in the secondary school that first year. We did not want to enroll students who came only

for the top class, therefore we did not offer Form Five during the first twelve months. We had three Form One classes and two each of Forms Two, Three, and Four, so we had a total of nine classes. We advertised the school in the local papers, specifying that I was to become principal. The government always wanted subsidised schools to reserve 30 out of 40 places in every Form One class so that it could accommodate students who had fared well in the selective public examination for secondary education. The school had ten places available in each class to admit pupils who had applied directly to the school. We could thus take in fewer than 300 students in all. Both boys and girls applied for the selection examinations. Originally, we had to borrow a hall from another school in order to test the applicants, but even that was not enough and finally we had to borrow two halls. About 2,000 young people were competing for 270 to 300 places. We had the teachers each set questions in their own subjects, which I discussed with them beforehand and approved before letting students take the exam. Mr Wong arranged for the teachers to grade the exam results. He gave them no pay but arranged a supply of biscuits and soft drinks in his outer office. In those days he had tiny premises in the western part of Hong Kong where he allowed teachers to correct their papers and provided them with lunch. It took several days for the teachers to grade 2,000-odd test papers and determine which candidates were to be interviewed.

It is indicative of the way in which the primary school system then favoured boys that, had we required the same pass mark for both sexes, we would have had about 60 to 70 per cent boys and 30 to 40 percent girls in this initial selection. I did not want such a large discrepancy; in fact I preferred to start the school with more or less the same number of students of both sexes. We thus decided to make a slight adjustment, so that more girls would have the opportunity to be interviewed. Those of either gender who had done quite badly were sifted out. Gradually the number of candidates was boiled down to a little more than the number of vacancies available. Naturally, the government sent us their quota of pupils and we filled all the other places.

Sometimes people would ask their relatives or friends to recommend them for a job or a place at school. We tried not to be influenced by this too much, although we invariably tested such candidates and assigned them to whatever they were entitled according to the test results. As it turned out, on only a few occasions were we forced to refuse someone entry because he or she simply did not make

the grade. I was given a free hand and the teachers were behind me, but we all worked hard to make the selection process fair. I managed to get an intake of 55 per cent boys and 45 per cent girls for our first batch of students, which I felt was quite satisfactory. After that first year the students were selected according to equal standards for both boys and girls. Our reputation had been sufficiently established that we successfully maintained an even ratio of boys and girls.

On the morning of Saturday, August 31, 1963, the Public Works Department at last sent someone to inspect the new school building and approve it. I had the teachers all ready at the school on the day. As soon as the inspectors gave their approval, I marched all my teachers over to the Department of Education on the Hong Kong side to be registered. We officially started school on Monday, September 2, 1963. In accordance with the practice that prevailed in those days, because September 1 fell on a Sunday, the teachers did not get paid for that day.

During student interviews, if I noticed a candidate who seemed to have a physical handicap—for instance there was one who was badly hunchbacked—I always gave him or her a chance. Some of the other schools would immediately eliminate someone with a physical defect, but if such students passed our written examinations and satisfied the interview board, we would take them. As it turned out, after two years, when we sent our first batch of students to sit for the School Certificate Examination, four of them were handicapped to varying degrees. Of course, we had given each of them a little special attention, but they did not need any preferential treatment in an intellectual sense, just consideration in overcoming their specific disability. For example when our student with the hunchback was about to take the exam, I wrote to the Examination Board explaining his situation. As a result he was assigned to a ground-floor room that did not require him to make an arduous climb upstairs.

On another occasion, I discovered that one of our students had a cleft palate and impaired speech, though he looked outwardly normal. I raised the matter with my staff, who advised me that there were several other students whose speech also seemed to be defective. As a result, I contacted a speech therapist who came and examined each and every one of them. It transpired that the first (and worst) afflicted pupil had previously been fitted with a small artificial palate that would close the cleft and enable him to talk more normally. However, he had outgrown the device. We were told he needed a new denture as well as

speech therapy, so we sent him to the Hong Kong government School Dental Service where the senior practitioner personally took care of the child. Fitted with a better corrective plate, the boy came under the guidance of the speech therapist, who showed the teachers how they could help. Later, when he went up for his exam, I wrote to explain the situation to the Examination Board. They gave him special consideration for his oral exam, which he successfully passed, along with the written tests. He was quite clever and instead of trying to find an ordinary job, he deliberately looked for work where he did not have to speak too much. Eventually he obtained employment in government, where his duties were mostly typing and copying.

I was fortunate during my term as Principal of the Confucian Tai Shing School because I had the support of two men who were highly experienced in running Chinese schools. They became my "left and right hands," so to speak, and were appointed as the dean of studies and the dean of discipline. Both stayed on after I left the Tai Shing School. One of them, Mr Yim Tse-choy, who died in 1986, left a legacy of dedication to the school that typifies the philosophy of such men. At the school, he helped supervise and organise all manner of activities and often stayed on after school hours to work on such projects himself. For instance, whenever the students went on excursions or field trips, he would go along in order to take photographs and record the event. He made prints available to the students at cost, while he paid for all the film out of his own pocket. He was an excellent Chinese scholar and helped me write many of my speeches and reports in Chinese.

Before Mr Yim retired, we persuaded him to help the students form an alumni association. He helped get it started with Mrs Elaine Chan Lee Bik-wah, and they both put in a great deal of time and effort to get the project off the ground. The association flourished and has since enabled the school to keep in touch with many of its graduates and, of course, encouraged and helped them keep in touch with each other. After he retired, Mr Yim could not seem to adjust to a sedentary life, not after being such an energetic, hard-working, and resourceful man. On the Speech Day following his death, the alumni association donated a prize to commemorate Mr Yim, a man who put others before himself. To this day, I try to keep in touch with many of our students who are now living in America, Canada, Australia, and Hong Kong. Most of them are doing well for themselves and many have done or are doing excellent work for society at large. This is one of the tangible and



most satisfying rewards of an educator's life.

While I was Principal-elect of Tai Shing School, I developed the urge to decide on a school creed. I recalled that while attending Diocesan Girls' School, we had had to learn the Christian creed by heart. It seemed to me that for our Confucian school the famous passage of Chinese philosophy known as the Ta Tung Pien, which I call the "Chinese Utopia," would be most appropriate. The original text is to be found in the *Book of Rites* and indeed may have been edited by Confucius himself, as well as by many generations of his followers over the centuries. It is one of the most famous passages of Chinese thought and philosophy and is a favourite of many political leaders, philosophers, and scholars, including the well-known Dr Sun Yat-sen, "Father of the Republic." The piece has been translated often, and versions differ due to the difficulty of finding the exact words to represent the classical Chinese. However, I venture to offer the following as a fair version of the "Great Harmony":

When the Great Principle prevails, the world is a commonwealth in which rulers are selected according to their wisdom and ability. Mutual confidence is promoted and good neighbourliness cultivated. Hence men do not only regard their own parents with parental respect, nor do they treat as children only their own children. Provision is secured for the aged until death, employment for the able-bodied, and the means of growing up for the young. Helpless widowers and widows, orphans and the old and childless, as well as the disabled and the sick, are well cared for. Men have their respective occupations and women have their homes. They do not like to see wealth lying idle, yet they do not keep it just for themselves. They despise indolence, yet they use their energies not only for their own benefit. In this way, selfish scheming is repressed and robbers, thieves, and other lawless men no longer exist and there is no need for people to shut their outer doors.

At the commencement of the first term, every student in all four schools was given a copy of the creed. Both primary and secondary pupils had to memorise and recite it, in Chinese of course. In the primary schools, each class teacher patiently taught the children how to read it while at the same time explaining its meaning to them in simple terms. To commence each assembly, the head teacher would lead the pupils and staff in reciting the creed. I was often surprised and greatly touched to see how well the little ones could recite this rather serious

piece of classical Chinese prose. Children have excellent memories, and I knew that they would remember it for the rest of their lives. I believed they would learn to understand its broader meanings as they grew up. Actually, our secondary school teachers of Chinese language and literature taught their students to understand the work in more depth and to appreciate its significance as a piece of Confucian philosophy and classical prose.

Our creed was similar to the Biblical passages that are often learnt by heart and used as moral guidelines in Christian schools. I vividly remember that when I first went to the Diocesan Girls' School, most of my classmates had learned their Christian catechism and creed in the lower school. I entered the school at Class Five, the lowest secondary school class, so I had not had the advantage of absorbing it slowly as a junior. There was so much of it I did not understand, so initially I just had to learn it by rote at home and then mouth the words along with the other girls. Gradually, the meaning began to dawn on me and I finally understood what it all meant.

We also introduced the "house" system into the school. There were four houses named after the apostles in the Confucian hierarchy. The first is Yen-tzu, Confucius's intelligent and favourite disciple who, much to the sage's sorrow, died when he was quite young. Next is Tseng-tzu, the slow learning disciple who worked extra hard. A book, *The Great Learning*, was traditionally attributed to his authorship, though some later scholars question this theory; perhaps he had begun it and others had revised it, over and over again, throughout the centuries. The third apostle was Confucius's own grandson, Tzu-szu, who was old enough to have been one of the sage's disciples. He has traditionally been regarded as the author of the *Doctrine of the Mean*, which gives the best account of the philosophical and spiritual ideas of the Confucian school of thought. People who find it difficult to accept Confucianism as a religion should try to study this book, especially from Chapter 19 onwards, to understand how Confucius and his disciples felt about religious ideas. Finally, the fourth apostle was not an immediate student of the sage, but the student of a student of Confucius's grandson Tsu-szu. His name is Mencius, which just means "The Sage Meng." He became perhaps the best exponent of Confucianism. As he lived some three centuries after the sage, the style of his writing is much more fluid, understandable, and easy to learn. All traditional scholars and students had to learn the *Four Books* by heart. The *Confucian Analects*, consisting mainly of short,

independent, and pithy sayings with little or no connection from one line to the next, was much more difficult to memorise. On the other hand, Mencius recorded some of the best arguments, and his chapters often extend for several pages at a time. He was an expert in leading the various dukes who spoke with him to understand his ideas, sometimes "pushing them into a corner" so that they could not easily extricate themselves and had to accept his point of view, making him a forceful orator indeed.

In retrospect, I feel quite fortunate that when I took my Senior Local Exam in 1918, the set book for the year was Mencius. Although my sister Eva and I did not have sufficient time to fully study all seven books of this "second sage," we read enough to really love his work. There are some excellent publications in English about Mencius. If anybody is interested and has the time and patience to find out a little more about Confucianism, I would strongly recommend Mencius as a first step. Here, I must ask the reader to forgive me if I proselytise, but as I claim to be a believer, I have instinctively used this opportunity to defend my faith.

Soon after our school was built, the government constructed a public swimming pool within easy walking distance of the Tai Shing School. I felt this provided an excellent opportunity for our students to learn how to swim. The climate in Hong Kong during the summer is hot and humid and there are many excellent beaches, most of which are accessible by public transport. Therefore I have always felt that any young person growing up in the territory—or in any city in the Tropics, for that matter—should learn how to swim. The school's physical education teacher fully agreed, so I cleared it with my deans and advised the teachers accordingly. We put up notices for the students to sign, but made them first obtain permission from their parents. As a result, it became a matter of routine that one day each week, immediately after normal school hours, the teacher and I would take forty students, twenty girls and twenty boys, to the swimming pool for lessons. Although I was not as good a swimmer as most of my sisters, I knew the fundamentals of the breast stroke. This enabled me to drill the girls, first in shallow water, until they could venture out to the deeper sections of the pool. We instructed many groups of students, and everyone found it an enjoyable and useful experience. Naturally, we also encouraged other forms of sports, and every year the school held a sports meet. Instead of encouraging personal glorification, the points

won by students in various competitions went towards their individual houses.

From time to time, the school organised trips to take students out of their immediate surroundings to see something of how other people lived. In those days there were not nearly as many opportunities to arrange study trips as there are now. All the same, we took them to the Royal Observatory, an aircraft carrier, a newspaper office, factories, picnics, and other such outings. Often we would ask some special person or dignitary to give a talk to all the secondary school students. For example, once we invited Dr Ellen Li, a well-known volunteer and pioneer in many aspects of social service. On another occasion, I asked a handicapped friend to visit us and demonstrate his versatility and skill in operating a wheelchair. He explained how he coped with his handicap and how he viewed his place in society.

As the Tai Shing School principal, I started each day with assembly, which was held in our beautiful and spacious school hall ten to fifteen minutes before classes began. Often there were messages I wanted to pass to the students directly, or some special training, encouragement, or moral uplift I wished to impart to them. At other times I might want to make a general announcement or comment on something that had gone wrong. I felt that otherwise there was little opportunity for direct contact between the principal and her students, and I considered this to be a highly important part of my duties. Now when I return to Hong Kong, decades after I left the school, the graduates and other students of the Confucian Academy sometimes hold a special reunion to greet me. It is as if they feel they knew me personally, even though most of them were not born until years after my departure.

The years I spent at the Confucian Tai Shing schools were among the happiest and most successful in my professional career. Many of the teachers, especially those in the secondary school, were fresh graduates straight from university or had served only a year or two elsewhere. They were mostly about the same age as my own daughter. I treated them as my nephews and nieces and am still in touch with many of them. It was not easy for me to retire from the school. I had developed a friendly relationship with the whole academic community, and when I finally resigned, I came to realise how much we all had enjoyed working with each other. It was a sad moment in many ways.

After having been principal of the Confucian group of schools

for four years, and having got them up and running smoothly, I felt it was time to "retire" for the second time in 1967. By then I was almost 63 years old. I hoped I might find some suitable employment in the United States, where the age of retirement was 65. It was there that my daughter June had married and settled down. But as fate would have it, I was unable to find a full-time job in America, despite approaching practically all the nearby universities, colleges, and local school systems. Finally someone advised me to try and join the adult education system and arranged an appointment for me to be interviewed by the deputy director, Mrs June Walter. Luckily we got along well together, and she referred me to the principals of Memorial and Hoover Adult Schools, both of whom I saw on the same day. As a result, I was asked to start a Cantonese class at the Hoover Adult School one evening a week.

The students wanted me to teach them some written Chinese, but there was not much time available. The class was actually designed to concentrate on oral work. Consequently, I decided to use the Confucian Utopia as a set example of Chinese writing. I would first explain carefully the ideas it embodied, and then each night I would write one or two phrases in large characters on the blackboard. I explained the composition of the characters and indicated the order of the strokes as I went. Many of the students were impressed with the ideas embodied in the Confucian Utopia and said they were surprised that such concepts had been advocated in China so many centuries ago. For me, East and West were once again coming together.

## San Diego

**A**t an age when most people are contemplating a well-earned rest, I was about to start life in a new country and hoped to be allowed to work at my profession and thus be a useful member of the community I was joining. I had no intention of fading into retirement if I could help it. Even before I set out for California, I had written to many of the universities on the lower west coast seeking work. After I arrived Dr Gwen Cooper, San Diego State University's senior woman counsellor, asked to see me. Although San Diego State College could not offer me a job, she advised me to apply to the San Diego Unified School District, which I did. They told me to apply for credentials to teach English, Chinese, social studies, and Chinese culture. This official sanction enabled me to teach those subjects for many years until I was no longer able to carry on and finally did retire.

At the outset, as noted, I taught at an adult education and college centre, which gave me a different perspective on how best to present the subjects. The older students often demanded more background information than a junior might need. As a result I was provided with opportunities to tell the mature students (mainly Chinese seniors) about my experiences during the first five trips I made to the People's Republic of China. In this way I could get them to appreciate the relationship between their classroom work and events unfolding in China. I did not actually have a full-time job, although I kept myself busy by tackling anything that came my way. For example, one autumn I was asked if I could immediately substitute for a professor who was teaching the Asian part in a course entitled "Afro-Asian Heritage" at the campus of the United States International University at Point Loma.

I believe I more than held the fort until this assignment was completed.

Of the various courses I taught, I most enjoyed the one conducted over the airwaves, which was called "TV Classroom." The textbooks we needed were all out of stock. Undaunted, I set about selecting suitable extracts from a number of available books and had the typist at the adult centre type them up and duplicate them. We ended up with quite a sizable volume that was handed out to all the students who had signed up for the course. I recorded two sessions a fortnight at the studios of Channel 8 TV that were broadcast at 6:30 am every Saturday morning. The course proved extremely popular, and I understand that my principal at the Hoover Adult School would often get up early especially to watch these broadcasts. Many a time I would walk into a restaurant and someone at a neighbouring table would call out, "I saw you on TV."

Apart from presenting courses, I occasionally delivered the odd lecture to selected audiences at venues such as the San Diego Rotary Club and the Severence Club in Los Angeles. I remember that soon after my first return trip to China I was invited to give a special lecture at Grossmont College. It was held in their assembly hall and was well attended. I took along a wealth of material, and afterwards I was generously remunerated. Some years later, I developed the China theme and taught that subject at the University of California Extension in San Diego, where for several years I presented two courses a year. At first, I called the class "China Yesterday and Today," which provided me with good reason to visit the new China. Later the course was renamed "China Revisited," and later still "China Today and Yesterday." Most of these sessions were evening courses, some held at the main campus or in Roosevelt Junior High School. I showed slides taken during my travels in China and talked about them as we went along. One evening, I discovered that the director of the extension, Dr Chamberlain, had slipped into the room to watch the show. I was pleased that he commented favourably on the material I was using and the way in which I was teaching the course. As an educator myself, and having been an administrator for many years, I really appreciated the way the extension staff took their duties seriously.

I remained unemployed or minimally employed for most of my 30 years in San Diego, so my Social Security finally reached the grand figure of US\$178 a month, having declined steadily, by a dollar a month each year, from its peak of \$182. It had begun at less than \$70 a month. This was partly because in the beginning I could not find work. Even

changed into a plain dress before leaving the train because my mother-in-law, who was delighted to see her grandchild and me, did not at that time know her son was dead. H.H.'s sister Mary had a manservant who went to Shanghai on a different boat and was also heading for north China. He dutifully brought some of my baggage and H.H.'s ashes by boat from Shanghai to Beijing so that we would have less to take care of on the train.

Most important among my possessions were my husband's ashes. I had collected these from the crematorium in Hong Kong a couple of days after H.H.'s cremation because I wanted to take them back to Beijing, which was where he had grown up. I bought two beautiful Chinese porcelain urns (normally used to hold cooked rice and therefore called "rice urns") and put the ashes in them. I had a wooden box specially made, padded with both straw and a piece of cloth to protect the urns. This box went by boat with the other baggage before we left Shanghai. I had Mary's manservant deliver the ordinary items of baggage to my mother-in-law and then take the box of ashes to H.H.'s aunt, whose advice I sought on where to place the urns. She rented a little cubicle in a temple run by Buddhist nuns to temporarily house the box containing the ashes.

On our first afternoon in Beijing, I telephoned my brother-in-law in Mukden. He was extremely sympathetic but told me definitely not to tell his mother that H.H. had died, because my father-in-law had passed away only a couple of years earlier and the old lady had been quite broken-hearted. It was natural, therefore, that her elder son sought to protect her from further grief for as long as possible. I promised to cooperate but, in my misery, found it doubly difficult to keep the truth from H.H.'s mother.

Soon after our arrival in Beijing, June had her first birthday. I suggested to my mother-in-law that it would be a good opportunity for us to go over to our aunt's house, where the ancestral shrine was, so that June could officially pay her respects to the ancestors. As a result the two old ladies invited a few of our closest relatives to come and join us for lunch. At the shrine in our aunt's home, I noted with interest that instead of having the usual wooden tablets for each ancestor, which was common in many established Chinese families, the Cheng family had instead a clear list of names written in good calligraphy on a sheet of red paper. The ancestors were all listed in order of seniority, with the dates of their



births and deaths. On these days, the members of the family would prepare special foods and offer them to the ancestor concerned. All direct descendants who could be contacted would be notified and invited to join in the ceremony and the meal afterwards. This tradition was similar to our ancestor worship in Hong Kong, except that in Beijing it was a great help for me as a newcomer to the family to have a list provided, a practice we did not follow at Idlewild. The list extended to paternal grandparents, beyond which generation memorial services were discontinued. The ancestors on the maternal side were of course not included, as their rightful place was in the shrines of their own families.

I remember especially three ladies who were among the senior relatives invited to join us on that first occasion when June and I officially paid our respects to the Cheng ancestors. One of these was Wa-gu, a younger daughter of H.H.'s grandfather by a concubine and thus an aunt to all those of our generation and sister-in-law to my mother-in-law. She was a year younger than I, but we all still called her aunt and treated her with special respect. Wa-gu, who was a capable and wise woman, took a special liking to June and me and was most sympathetic towards a young widow with an infant to raise alone. The other two women were Second and Fifth Aunts from the Shen family, both bosom friends of my mother-in-law, and both very intelligent and well-educated in Chinese culture. They were also first cousins of the Cheng family in a special kind of way that typifies the complexity of the Chinese extended family.

The intertwining relationships of the Cheng family had intrigued me since I first came to know the family in Beijing in 1926. It was then that I was able to ask many detailed questions of my sister-in-law, with whom I was staying, about the family's illustrious heritage. Before my wedding I had been told that they were among the many proud descendants of the former Imperial Commissioner Lin Jexu (Lin Tse-hsu), famous for confiscating and destroying British opium way back in 1839. During the late 1930s, I met many of H.H.'s relatives in Hong Kong and at the invitation of his sister Mary attended many of their family gatherings. At these I was introduced to various categories of cousins. However, when I asked them how they were all related, neither Mary nor H.H. could enlighten me. One day out of curiosity I asked one of the older folks, Mr C.C. Liu—who later officiated for the Cheng family at our wedding—and he began drawing the family tree for me, a device I had always found intriguing. Mr Liu explained that

There were four teachers including myself, and I also served as principal and secretary of the board of trustees. Nevertheless, because I knew the school had no funds, I only accepted an honorarium of US\$100 a month as a contribution towards my Social Security. What gave the school its strength and resilience was the quality of the members of the board. Our treasurer, Mrs Mary Lou Hom, volunteered for the job and watched the dollars and cents with tact and tenacity for many years. The two other members—Ed K.M. Sue, a chartered accountant, and Paul S. Kennerly, an attorney—were equally as enthusiastic in volunteering their time and expertise. Together they made a caring but highly businesslike team. Fortunately, as the years passed and new members were elected to replace old members, the board maintained its quality and enthusiasm.

The school was soon incorporated in order to obtain tax relief for the donations it received, but the job of raising funds to keep it going was still hard and at times frustrating work. I became the chief "beggar" and approached friends and acquaintances not only in California, but also in Hong Kong. Even though some believed that having made their money in Hong Kong they should spend it there, they usually made a special concession and gave me a small donation as an expression of encouragement. Education is held in high esteem by the Chinese, and therefore the survival of our little school was considered to be of social importance. This view was also held by the teachers and resource people who assisted right at the beginning and helped set up the organisation and establish its high teaching standards. They were pleased to give the children their dedicated service, yet all we could offer them in return was an honorarium to defray the cost of petrol and other incidentals. The school grew rapidly, not so much in numbers, but in reputation. It served to demonstrate the importance of providing a place where the children of Chinese-American parents could acquire some knowledge about their rich heritage. As a result of this ideal, there are now at least a half-dozen similar schools in the San Diego area.

As I write, our original school has been in existence for more than two decades, during which time it has maintained the high standards and enthusiasm that so typified those early years. One of the first staff changes occurred when the school was not quite two years old and I decided to go to China on my first visit since the country had been "liberated" by the communists some twenty-odd years before. To my delight, I found Mr Victor O. Chain to replace me. He was a fully

bilingual scholar and one of the best translators and calligraphists I have ever known. One of his specialities was dramatics, so for our school commencement exercises and other public functions, his guidance and direction became invaluable. He was principal of our school for almost five years, during which time the numbers of students rose steadily, although it never quite reached one hundred. New students kept coming, but old ones would of course leave as they entered higher classes in their regular schools and could no longer spare time to attend Chinese lessons as well. I was gratified when many of our old pupils opted to take Chinese courses after they entered college. Thus they were able to build on the little knowledge we had imparted to them.

Every staff or faculty member had their own particular gifts to offer the school. When Mr Chain retired he was replaced by Mrs Sylvia Young, who had been a parent, teacher, member of the board of directors, and committee member of the Parent-Teachers' Association. She had graduated from an excellent Chinese secondary school in Hong Kong and an eastern U.S. college, while her postgraduate work was undertaken at San Diego State University where she majored in education, gaining a master's degree in special education. Therefore she was a most suitable person for the principal's job. She scouted local bookstores and those in Los Angeles and San Francisco to help build our stock of textbooks. She also designed a considerable amount of teaching materials herself, which she was ever willing to share with her colleagues who welcomed her guidance.

After some years Sylvia was succeeded by Mrs Gloria Ho, who stayed with us for only one year but during that time introduced a Saturday morning adult class in Mandarin. This was popular with many non-Chinese students, who took advantage of it to learn at least a little of the Chinese language, some of which was put to use during holidays in China. Gloria was succeeded by Mrs Jeannette Srbich, who is specially remembered because she was understanding and sympathetic towards the staff and promoted high morale within the school. After her departure, Mr Don T.T. Kwan, an expert translator, took over. The progression of principals continued, of course, with each in their own way contributing something personal to the school in addition to carrying out their duties.

Because the school grew directly from the specific needs of a small group of parents and children, it has always been policy to structure the curriculum with them in mind. In the beginning we ran

classes three times a week. We thought this would make it easier for the children to absorb, retain, and practice information from lesson to lesson. However, some parents soon found this to be too much, as they had to drive their children to and from school. Therefore Thursday classes were discontinued, which left classes on Tuesdays after day school and on Saturday mornings. I cannot help feeling that it was a great pity when classes were further reduced to once a week, on Saturday mornings only. Although this may have been convenient for some, I thought that it was totally inadequate. Students intending to learn and retain a second language require more than one lesson a week, particularly if their families could not provide continued practice at home. Understandably, the perceived need for classes changed as the Chinese community made its own social adjustments within the larger multiracial community. We had begun with four classes, two Cantonese and two Mandarin, of which I initially taught one Cantonese class. At the height of Mr Chain's administration, instruction rose to seven classes, with a student enrolment of almost one hundred. Then gradually the number of classes declined, generally fluctuating according to the number of students enrolled. Throughout its existence the school regularly improved and added to its textbooks and equipment, with much of the material being donated.

One milestone in the school's history was its tenth anniversary in 1980, for which a commemorative booklet was published. By this time I had retired and Mrs June Walter, a member of the board, had installed Sylvia Young as my successor. Unfortunately, Sylvia's ill health and that of her husband made it almost impossible for her to devote much time to the school, so I felt it necessary to continue "holding the fort" for several more years. Eventually the Rev (later Dr) Karl Fung, also a board member, came to my rescue and took over the duties of school supervisor. He reorganised many facets of its operation. After a few years, he too wished to pass on his duties to someone else. As Sylvia's health and circumstances had by then improved, we elected her to take charge as president of the board.

On September 30, 1990, when the school celebrated its twentieth anniversary, more than 190 former students, parents, staff, board members, donors, and well-wishers gathered at a Chinese restaurant in San Diego to celebrate the event. The organising committee used the occasion to honour Victor Chain and myself, presenting each of us with a second plaque to thank us for what we

were still able to do for the school. Both of us had continued to serve the school, especially in fund-raising drives, for which Victor invariably wrote the letters of appeal and I was (once more) the chief beggar. It was deeply satisfying to see so many of our former students once again, many of whom had been sensible enough to continue Chinese classes when they went on to college. Most had been successful in their careers and their personal lives. A few brought along their children, and this fostered the hope of a new generation that would benefit from the continued existence of our specialised little school. Unfortunately, however, we have since had to close the school for a variety of reasons.

Although I had now settled in America and made it my home, I still felt my cultural homeland was Hong Kong, followed closely by the United Kingdom. The latter had greatly influenced life in the colony, of course, and was also where I had spent many of my formative years and acquired so much of my academic knowledge. The fact that two of my sisters and their families had settled in Britain strengthened my continued links with that country. As it turned out, I was able to visit the United Kingdom in 1968 and then again in 1973 and 1980. The first time was to attend the World Federation for Mental Health conference in London. This gave me the opportunity to meet some of the friends I had made when I was on its Executive Board (1956-59) and also to visit close relatives and other friends. Later, when I planned my first trip to the People's Republic of China in 1973, I decided to give myself a real holiday, so I took a sabbatical from the San Diego adult schools system. Instead of returning to America via the Pacific route, which would have been normal, I made my way home via Europe. First I went to Greece, which I had never before visited, and later travelled on to the Grisons, a tiny village in Switzerland, to see my old friends Dr Paul Geheeb and his wife Edith who ran the famous institution, l'Ecole d'Humanite. I stayed with them for almost a week before moving on to the United Kingdom to spend a fortnight with my sisters Grace and Florence and their families. By then, they were both busy with their many grandchildren. Grace's daughter Shirley had two sons, and each of Florence's children—Richard, Daphne, and Wendy—had a son and a daughter apiece. At each home I spent a few days showing photos or slides that I had taken in China, renewing relationships, and enjoying the close sisterly affection we shared.

In the United Kingdom, several of my old professional friends

and their close relatives treated me like family. One was Prof Wilfred Vickers, whom I first knew at The University of Hong Kong where he had spent a year as a substitute professor of psychology. I have already described how I had the good fortune to "sit at his feet" when studying logic during the 1920s. He and his first wife, Edith, had spent many Saturday afternoons at our home on the Peak, often with another good friend, Mr Alfred Morris, who had trained Eva and myself to look after honey bees. Mrs Morris usually accompanied her husband on these visits when we all had tea with Mamma, and I got to know the four of them quite well. Later, when I was a student in London, Prof Vickers had given me much professional guidance and also arranged for me to spend some time as an understudy inspector of schools when he worked for the County of Kent. Later he remarried and his second wife, Winnie, became a good friend of mine. I stayed in the homes of both couples. Even after Prof Vickers passed away after a long illness, Winnie still asked me to stay with her on one occasion; another time she arranged for me to stay with her married niece.

In the autumn of my years, I began to cherish this delicate tapestry of old friendships that spanned many decades and a number of generations. People like Edna Hamley were typical. I got to know her when I was a Ph.D candidate and her husband, the late Prof Hamley, had edited my thesis. Edna offered to type the thesis for me, as she could read her husband's notes and corrections more easily than I. During that time we became friends, and from then on we kept in touch with each other. I am sad to say that within a couple of years after my departure from England in 1936, Prof Hamley had a stroke and suddenly passed away, leaving Mrs Hamley with two teenage children to bring up. To make ends meet, she took in lodgers and tutored students and so was able to provide both of her children with an excellent education. I like to believe that the support of friends such as me helped Edna Hamley to cope with some of the difficulties she must have faced during those lean years.

That year I did not return to Hong Kong immediately after leaving Britain. Instead I travelled to the United States in order to visit some relatives on my husband's side and a few close friends. These included my sister-in-law Mary and her husband George, who lived in New Jersey, and my nieces Yvonne and Rosamund (whose mother was H.H.'s elder sister) near New York City. I visited a good friend, Wen Yuan, as well as Julia, a cousin of H.H.'s, who were living near

Washington, D.C. Also on my visitation "hit list" were members of the Yue family, who had settled in Minneapolis, Minnesota. As usual, the Chinese network was solidly in place. Thus I was able to strengthen family bonds and renew friendships while at the same time satisfying my thirst for travel, making it a really memorable round-the-world trip.

Often after one of my trips abroad I would record my reminiscences of the journey and sometimes send copies to relatives and friends, especially those who had been kind and hospitable to me. I regarded these as news items to be copied for general distribution, but I would add a personal message for each individual recipient. In this way I helped to maintain my own network of relatives and friends and generally strengthened the bonds of the widespread Chinese community. The following is typical of one such circular, written after my trip to Britain in 1980:

I have just returned from a six-week trip to the United Kingdom, chiefly to visit my seventh and eighth sisters Grace and Florence, their families, and some of my many dear friends there. I left San Diego on April 12, staying one night in Los Angeles on each leg of the journey. I stayed at ten different places and saw several dozen people that I had planned to visit. I had a good time and am truly grateful for the warm reception I received from all of them.

I spent just over a week with each of my two sisters and one of my nieces, four days with another, single nights with several friends, and two at Penzance to see Land's End. The last few days were spent in a little Welsh village in Pembrokeshire, with the Atlantic Ocean just ten minutes away by car. The weeks seemed to slip by quickly. I had a British Rail Pass for the first three weeks, during which time I really did the rounds. Starting from London, I first went through Kent to Dorset, then Cornwall, up to Gloucestershire, and finally as far north as Yorkshire. The return trip took me through Leicestershire, then Surrey, and finally back to London.

In Surrey I stayed with my artist niece, Wendy, who lived at Kingston, near London. From there I could make day trips as and when I wished. One day, a friend organised a lunch for me at the Royal Festival Hall to which I took along my slide projector. After lunch, I "borrowed" the reception room of the Hong Kong Student Centre in Lancaster Gate and showed my relatives and friends my slides of China and my new home in California.

During this trip I was also glad to have a chance to see some old friends in the mental health field — and to make new ones. I paid two visits to M.I.N.D., the new headquarters of the National Association for Mental Health, ordering some of their literature for myself and some to take home for others. Another evening, I attended a slide show of the Great Britain/China Centre (equivalent to the U.S./China Friendship Association), while I was staying with my sister Grace at Professor Hemel Hempstead. Grace also took me to see a London theatre production, which is one of my favourite activities in Britain. Her daughter and son-in-law, Shirley and Tony, also took us out for dinner and a theatre show.

In Dorset and Leicestershire I visited octogenarian "teacher mothers" (as the Chinese refer to the wives of one's teachers). Their husbands had been exceptionally kind to me, so I always try to look them up when I am in Britain. Anyway, their relatives entertained us for dinner and put me up for the night — two old folks who just enjoyed seeing each other again. I also have a godson and his wife who used to live in London, so I used their home as a base and spent three nights there. I had undertaken most of my postgraduate studies in London, which I knew fairly well, so I spent some time returning to Hyde Park near Peter Pan's statue and walking the streets of the west central district. The spring blossoms and flowers everywhere were beautiful, and I took many photographs in the parks and at my relatives' gardens and homes. In Kent we visited Charles Dickens's house, while in Sheffield we went to the university's music department. We also saw a home for mentally retarded young adults who could go out to work but went "home" each evening to eat and sleep.

The pound sterling has dropped greatly in value and things are very expensive, with a 15 per cent sales tax and petrol costing over two pounds a gallon. The London traffic was very crowded. Just before my return, there was a one-day strike by the Underground railway workers, which fortunately didn't affect me. Another day, the suburban train had a derailment, so it took a full hour to do a journey that should take about thirty minutes. Fortunately my niece was with me, but we were both very tired, and I probably caught my bad cold that night. It lasted all the time I was in Wales and finished off with a cough, which lasted another ten days. Otherwise my health kept up pretty well, but invariably I asked for a wheelchair at the airports and enjoyed the convenience. Altogether I had a good time and was glad I made the trip. Since my return I have been feeling lazy, and it will take me a good deal of time to catch up with many accumulated jobs, including much urgent correspondence, both professional and personal. I hope my



friends will be patient with me. I shall have this duplicated to form the basis of my next circular letter and just add a personal message wherever possible.

Another sample of my circular letters after a trip to the United Kingdom in 1987 reads:

To my relatives and friends in the UK: THANK YOU. First of all I want to say a sincere thank you especially to those who showered hospitality and affection on me in many ways, and to add that I am pleased to have decided so suddenly to take the trip, especially in view of my limited mobility. You all were so kind and understanding and lavished your affection in so many ways, all of which I deeply appreciated.

Although I did not mention it at the time, I felt particularly grateful and yet guilty for the heavy expense that I caused you all, especially in the cost of petrol, the price of which was so much more than it is in the United States. However, I did appreciate being driven around instead of having to take public transport. I shall not forget all the beautiful blossoms on the trees, pink, white, yellow, and other colours. However, perhaps my favourite colour is the lovely young green of your beech leaves, and all the shades of young green on the new leaves and green lawns. When I first arrived in the UK on April 15, most of the trees only had leaf buds, but by the time my departure was drawing near, most of the leaves were out. I was impressed by the way the weather seemed to cooperate with Shirley and Tony's wonderful party. I was concerned for their sakes when the weather turned bad for the weekend, but was pleasantly surprised to note that the storm held off when it was time for guests to arrive, and we managed to get under the tarpaulin without getting wet. Then during the "feast," the storm raged outside, and the chandeliers swung inside, but none of us seemed to mind as we were too busy enjoying each other's company. However, before it was time for us to disperse once again, the weather had cleared, so that everybody could leave in comfort.

The storm seemed to have another function to serve because the next day, when Wendy and Richard drove me into Richmond Park on our way to Christopher and Barbara's, the young leaves and blossoms were more beautiful than ever. Wendy sensibly took some lovely shots of the trees and a few close-ups of the blossoms and the rhododendrons. On the day before my departure, I visited Kew Gardens, which I well remembered from my student days in the late 1920s.

Grace had told me that there were wheelchairs at the gardens that people could borrow or rent. I wasn't sure whether we could also pay to have an attendant push us around, but I decided to take the risk. I still have considerable faith in human nature being fundamentally good.

When I reached the gardens, I asked about the wheelchairs, but was disappointed to find that I needed my own "pusher." The gatekeeper even pointed to a young couple, whom he thought might be willing to help me. I approached them, but they declined. Two American women who were standing near the large map of the gardens also declined to assist me. So I just sat there on my "shooting stick" until a couple from Germany turned up at the ticket office. I asked then where they had come from, and they confirmed that they were, indeed, German. I tried a few German words and phrases that I still remembered, and it worked. The woman told me she would be delighted to push me around. I found that she spoke good English and discovered later that she was a veterinarian. The husband, an architect, took many photographs. The three of us had a wonderful day together. I reached home safely at about 8 pm, San Diego time, on May 7 after having been up and awake for almost 27 hours.

The world was changing, and in the aftermath of the Vietnam War America was confronted with a new immigrant problem. Our little community only saw this from a limited perspective, of course, but we did try to alleviate the situation in a small way. When the first group of Vietnamese refugees came to San Diego in the summer of 1975, I was working part-time at the Chinese Social Service Centre. Since there were some Chinese Vietnamese among the refugees, the centre's director was keen to help them, and I volunteered for the task. I was still quite spry in those days, so at least once a week I would drive the many miles to Camp Pendleton, where the refugees were temporarily housed in tents. Whenever I visited the camp I normally held a meeting with the Chinese newcomers, during which I helped them to fill in a questionnaire to determine their educational levels, skills, immediate needs, and their hopes for the future in their new land. I would send this information to various Chinese organisations around the country in an attempt to find them sponsors. We even organised a Chinese Refugee Resettlement Co-operative to focus our collective efforts on helping these people assimilate quickly and begin to lead useful lives. Sometimes we were successful.

A fairly typical case was the Liu family. The co-operative's first real contact with the family arose when a former Hoover Adult School student of mine, Mr Jack Chin, sponsored one of the Liu daughters so that she could enter school to prepare her to earn a living. At the time, another friend of mine, Mrs Kitty Tow, was thinking of starting a Miss China Restaurant and went along with me to meet the refugees at the camp to see if she could employ any of them. As a result, she sponsored out a whole family, gave a job to the girl's mother, Mrs Liu, and helped put the children into schools. I assisted in placing the youngest ones in a preschool. The husband was a goldsmith and had run a jewellery store in Vietnam. Therefore I had him compile a list of the tools and equipment he would need to practice his trade. I sent this off to Hong Kong to the youngest son of my former teacher, Mr Lo Sheung Fu (who became a centenarian), and he obtained the necessary instruments and sent them to Mr Liu in San Diego. The last I heard of the Liu family was that they had one jewellery store in Los Angeles and another in Sacramento.

We were unable to find all the sponsors or employers the refugees needed through our efforts alone. However, we did have a measure of success, and the situation improved considerably when the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association of Los Angeles, set up a small office right in the camp manned by refugees. Each family was put on a joint questionnaire, and in a matter of weeks they were able to find sponsors for dozens of Chinese Vietnamese families. Meanwhile Mr Edward McWilliams, the young chief assistant to the director of the camp, who was a young up-and-coming diplomat, was sent there by the US State Department. In this way the authorities were able to handle the refugee problem.

## Return to the New China

**A**lthough I adopted the United States as my home and even became an American citizen, I could never forget my mixed racial heritage. Having been a British subject for so many years influenced my thinking, of course, but ultimately I regarded myself as a Chinese who through exposure had become something of a citizen of the world. The Chinese side of my personality was not simply a matter of genetics. It had been developed through the influence and example of my parents during my formative years and through the early training I received from old Master Chiu. One way it manifested itself was the genuine concern I felt for the welfare of China and its people. Perhaps because of my background, I always believed that for the common good there should be harmony between China, Britain, and the United States. Like many overseas Chinese, I do not profess to understand politics to any great extent, but I have hopes for the future of what I consider to be my mother country and the teeming millions who live within its borders.

When the University of California's San Diego Extension asked me to conduct a course on "China Yesterday and Today," I was given the justification and impetus to make a return trip in 1972 to see the new China as it had become under the Communists. This was the first of many visits I was to make over the years on behalf of several institutions and community college centres, so I came to regard my trips to China as a way of keeping myself up-to-date for the various courses I was conducting. The first trip began to take shape after it was made public that President Richard Nixon would visit Beijing early in 1972, an historic event. I saw in this a possible opening for other Americans to enter China and decided I would like to be one of the first. My network

of family and friends helped me considerably. One of my relatives in Hong Kong, Mr J.M. Tan, was a good friend of Madame Sun Yat-sen and her secretary, Ms Cynthia Liao Meng Sing. Cynthia was a good friend of mine, as she and her illustrious mother, Madame Ho Hsiang Ning, had served with me on two committees: the Hong Kong Women's Relief Association and the Hong Kong Branch of the Chinese National Association for the Care of War Orphans.

At that time China had been isolated from the world for more than twenty years, and even I did not know what to expect if I did manage to be granted entry. As it turned out, my fears were largely unfounded. After my visa to China was approved and issued, I was placed in the care of the Overseas Chinese Travel Service, which like many other organisations came under the wing of the Chinese Foreign Office. The manager of the China Travel Service in Hong Kong, Mr Henry Tsoi, asked me to call upon him. When I did so, in casual conversation we discovered that we both knew Ms Cynthia Liao and her mother, who happened to have passed away that September. As a result of that conversation, Mr Tsoi wrote a note to Cynthia advising her that I was going to China to gather information to use in my lectures at UCSD. He asked her to pass the letter to Madame Sun (whom, of course, I also knew). I felt these letters would be useful, so I made copies of them and put them in my baggage.

Having bought quite a few things to take as gifts for my relatives and friends, I ended up with a good deal more luggage than I expected. In those days luxury items had little place in the daily lives of the people of China. The largest gift I bought was a bicycle for my niece. I got it from China Products, China's only retail outlet in Hong Kong and its only source of overseas trade revenues at the time. The bicycle had been made in China, but could not be obtained easily within the country without a considerable wait and much bureaucracy. Factory production could not keep up with demand, and in some areas there was a twenty-year waiting list for bicycles. China Travel collected the disassembled bicycle for me, because in those days China-made bicycles were exported in heavy-duty hemp bags.

The train ticket China Travel sold me was valid only as far as Shenzhen, a town just across the border from Hong Kong. I asked the travel agency manager about it, but he told me not to worry. I was, it seems, fully at the mercy of the Chinese Communist government once I crossed into their territory. My bags had been put on the train at Kowloon

station, so the first time I saw them was at the customs house in Shenzhen. Possessions were normally searched quite thoroughly. I dutifully opened my baggage to prepare for the ordeal. While waiting in line I pulled out Mr Tsoi's letter to Cynthia and showed it to a customs officer by way of explaining the purpose of my journey. It worked wonders because, after reading it, he said there was no need to search my baggage. Afterwards, I told my friends that the letter was better than any passport.

When the train arrived at Guangzhou it was announced that all passengers in the care of any branch of the China Travel Service should stand in a group on the platform. Soon several officials came along and one woman asked, "Who is Ho Ai-ling?" referring to my Chinese name. I stepped out and was told to hand over my luggage receipts so that the bags could be collected for me. Meanwhile I was escorted to a Japanese-made car and driven to the hotel in the Overseas Chinese Building, at which I later stayed on a number of occasions. One person in the reception group looked after my registration while the others whisked me to a large room on an upper floor where we were seated and served tea. I then realised that the Chinese government had decided to give me the "red carpet treatment." In a semi-formal atmosphere my hosts welcomed me sincerely, told me their names and who they were, and then we discussed the details of my trip. They said the Chinese government wished me to be its guest for a total of forty days. I told them forty days was not nearly enough time for me to complete my business, because I had been away from China for twenty-six years. If possible I was hoping to spend some time with relatives, and I also had some family affairs to attend to. Since the atmosphere was friendly, I was not going to make it easy for them to persuade me to limit my visit to forty days. To my delight, persistence finally paid off. They agreed to let me be their guest for the first forty days of the visit, after which I would pay my own way for the remaining fifty days. This was just within the limits of my visa, which allowed me three months.

For the first forty days I was to be provided with a female guide who would accompany me on all my sightseeing or professional visits and make all necessary travel and hotel arrangements. Even though she was my constant companion during the day, she always took her meals separately from me unless we were both being entertained together. The guide turned out to be a great convenience since for forty days

I was able to leave all the travel details for her to organise. I even asked her to take notes for me as well. At the time many people thought that her job was to spy on me, but I do not think this was true. In fact, as soon as the day's visits were over, my time was my own and I could do anything I liked. Occasionally I would stay in the hotel, but often I would go out with relatives or friends or just by myself. Naturally, I wanted to make the most of the time I had. I did not feel restricted in any way.

My welcoming party at the hotel showed me to my room, where my baggage had just arrived, including the bicycle. It took me the next couple of days to sort things out. Some of the things were to be sent direct by train to relatives or friends in Beijing, Shanghai, or Hangzhou. The bicycle was sent separately to my niece. I was advised to mail her the receipt so that she could take delivery of it and have it properly registered when it had arrived. Another important gift was cotton dress material for three of my elderly female relatives. Clothing material was rationed at the time, and cotton was the standard material from which the Chinese made the ubiquitous jacket and trouser suits worn by both men and women of all ages and social position, from peasant to president.

Since I was to stay in or around Guangzhou for about a week, one of the first things I did was telephone my friend, Mrs C.K. Yeung, who immediately came to collect me at the hotel and take me to her home for dinner with her husband. Their amah was an excellent cook and had been with Mrs Yeung since before she was married, so I was not too surprised when she joined us for dinner. It was not until later that I came to realise that in the new China this was normal practice, unless there were special reasons to do otherwise. The autumn trade fair, known internationally as the Guangzhou Fair, was due to close soon, so my hosts wasted no time in taking me to see it. I was impressed with the excellent organisation and particularly liked that it was not just a showplace to sell the country's products, but also a source of information about the outstanding developments that had taken place in the new China. Each exhibition was attended by a young woman brought to Guangzhou for the occasion. She spoke perfect Mandarin and could tell the whole story of a particular development illustrated with large but highly detailed models. Those exhibits were my introduction to some of the major schemes being undertaken by the Communist regime, many of which I was later to visit as a guest of the government.

Naturally, I wanted to revisit the former Lingnan University where

I had worked and lived for more than two years. The authorities were more than happy to arrange a visit for me. When I arrived I was given a warm reception by the administrators. They took me for a tour of Swasey Hall, which was used by the entire college as well as the secondary and primary schools. They also took me to Martin Hall where my former quarters and place of work had been. This evoked nostalgic memories. Instead of using some of the rooms as classrooms, as was the case in my day, in 1972 the entire building was used as a library. I was told that a new library building had already been planned and was being built. I saw this on a later visit after it was complete. The former primary school buildings, where I had spent six weeks teaching English to the fifth grade class, were being used as an extension of the library. I was delighted that one of the library attendants recognised me. I had been chairman of the library committee that looked after that unit during the temporary absence of the chief librarian, Mr Tam Cheuk Woon, when he went for a year's further training at a famous library school in the upper Yangtse Valley.

I originally asked to revisit many of the places I had previously seen in order to compare how things had changed since the establishment of the People's Republic of China. However, because of the harsh northern winter and the fatigue of travelling, my guides and I finally decided to spend a few days in each of the major cities: Guangzhou (Canton), Beijing (Peking), Yenan, Xian (Sian), Nanjing (Nanking), Shanghai, and Hangzhou (Hangchow). At each stop I would tour the city and take in as much of the countryside as time allowed. For instance, in Guangzhou they took me for a long weekend to several smaller towns in the vicinity. These included the small town of Fatshan, which used to make the little pottery objects often found in goldfish tanks and has since grown into a modern manufacturing area. There was time for relaxation and sightseeing at places such as the famous Seven Star Caves and the Buddhist mountain called Ting Hu to which Mamma had been many times. I greatly enjoyed the changes of scene.

What impressed me most about the country as a whole was the spirit of the people. At the time the western world viewed Communism as a political threat to democratic freedom. Possibly this was true of the Russian ideology, but to the Chinese Communism offered an alternative to hardship, suffering, and abject poverty for the masses. Many things had improved under the totalitarian system. Although much still had to be done, the people had pride in their achievements and optimism for



the future. In their eyes Communism was far better than what had gone before. This was particularly evident when I visited Yen-an in Shensi Province. Yen-an was the nursery of the Communist regime where Chairman Mao Zedong had stayed for more than a dozen years. It was there that he had written many of his political and philosophical works, since published in many languages as part of his *Selected Works*. It was in Yen-an that he had planned the structure and formulated the overall policy of the new China.

The temperature at Yen-an was extremely cold, often registering eleven degrees Celsius below zero at night, but during the day the sun was bright and warm, matching the warm reception I was given. Because of the extreme weather, my guide and I were the only guests at the country hotel where we were staying. Part of our itinerary was to visit each simple residence where the Chairman had stayed during his sojourn in the area many years before. At each place we were met by a young guide who was filled with revolutionary zeal and infectious enthusiasm. We were shown around many little museums displaying items related to Chairman Mao, the Party, and the Red Army. These were supported with visual aids showing simple written explanations, photographs, maps, and diagrams that gave a clear picture of events before and after the Long March. Every year thousands of people visited these places during the warmer months, and I could well understand how the experience imbued them with the spirit of perseverance against adversity that had brought the Party to eventual success. Indeed, I felt the same way myself, even though I had no strong political beliefs.

At one centre in Yen-an there was an old farmer named Yang who had known the Chairman personally in the old days when the Communists were struggling to gain power. Later, he had been specially invited to visit Chairman Mao at his home in Beijing. Now, after retirement, farmer Yang was retained at a village called Wang Chia Ping and charged with the task of meeting special visitors and telling them how things were during the historic days before the Chairman took over. Although the Mandarin of his Shensi dialect was not easy to follow, his enthusiasm was genuine and unmistakable. I was allowed to take a tape recorder with me, so I made my own permanent record of his voice. When I had my photograph taken with him, he proudly told me that he had also been photographed by the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars who visited China in June 1971, and this shot was printed in their book entitled *China: Inside the People's Republic*.

Our next stop was Xian, capital of the province of the same name. There we were again shown many places connected with the early history of the Communist Party. For instance, we saw the house that had been used by the Party as its headquarters during the years of the Nationalist government in China and the coalition to fight their common enemy, Japan. This house had been preserved as a museum, with guides to show people around the various rooms used by Party leaders such as Chairman Mao, Premier Zhou Enlai, and General Zhu De. We were told how the Party headquarters had been surrounded by Nationalist offices and houses, such that great vigilance was needed to sustain the operation. As a result, the radio transmission gear used to be hidden in an underground chamber and was used only at night.

Xian is also the site of the famous mineral baths once frequented by the Ming Emperor of the Tang dynasty and his beautiful concubine, Yang Kuei Fei. We were taken there, not only because of this historical connection, but because it was here that Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek had been captured by his own generals, Chang Hsueh-liang and Yang Hu-cheng, on December 12, 1936. They had been convinced by the Communist leaders that it was necessary to do this in order to press Chiang to cooperate with them in the fight against the Japanese. A guide described this incident in vivid detail. According to the story, Generalissimo Chiang had been sleeping in one of the rooms at the back of the building when a shot, fired by mistake, made a hole in the window of his sitting room and alerted him to perceived danger. He is said to have jumped out of the bedroom window and run up a hill at the back of the house and hidden behind a large rock some way off. Later he was discovered and captured. I understand that Generalissimo Chiang's account of the incident differs from this, but I have not yet read it. Ten years afterwards a supporter of Chiang's erected a pavilion at the site of the capture in memory of the event. When the Communists "liberated" Xian, they preserved the monument but changed its name to "Catch Chiang Pavilion."

I was taken for a walk up the hill to see the building, after which we came down and were again invited to try bathing in the famous mineral waters, which record temperatures of about 109 degrees Fahrenheit. I was given the special privilege of having my bath at the site originally used by the beautiful concubine Yang Kuei Fei. This bath has now been redesigned in the shape of a geometric figure formed by four arcs altogether about ten feet long by five feet wide. The

temperature was quite comfortable, and I stayed in it for about half an hour. Unfortunately I must have been allergic to the minerals in the water, for afterwards I developed a slight itchiness all over that lasted several days. All the same, soaking in Kuei Fei's bath was most relaxing and enjoyable at the time.

That first trip back to China lasted from November 1972 until February 1973, during which time I was given plenty of opportunity to study the conditions under which ordinary people lived. In those days the Party was absolute. Besides relics at places of special significance such as Yen-an and Xian, everywhere there were constant reminders of Chairman Mao, his teachings, and international leaders of the Communist movement. In the reception room of every institution we visited, there was invariably a large portrait of Chairman Mao at one side and the four ideologues—Marx, Lenin, Engels, and Stalin—at the other. In all airports, railway stations, and other public places, there would be a larger-than-life portrait or statue of the Chairman as well as large reprints of various quotations from him, Marx, or Lenin.

Several times each day, music was broadcast over speakers to encourage people to do their physical exercises. It was usually preceded by the statement that "the great leader Chairman Mao has taught us to strengthen our physique so as to defend the country." The entrances of public buildings were emblazoned with the slogan, "To serve the people," and public servants were expected to do just that. Students in schools and colleges, even nursery school children, were taught to work towards the same ideal. They were given little tasks to perform or some kind of productive labour from an early age so that they would grow up with this ultimate objective.

All jobs were assigned, but before students left school or university they were allowed to express their wishes regarding where they would like to be sent. It was said that the "political training" was so successful that in many instances young people ask to be assigned to the frontiers, or wherever they could be of maximum service to the country. Many aspired to an army career, but this was reserved for only the best in political thought, character, and studies. Those wishing to join the army had to be at least 18 years of age and to have a senior middle school education. It also helped if they had what was considered to be good family backgrounds. The sons of workers and farmers were favoured, as were the children of soldiers. At the time, the west knew little of what was happening in China, but because of the taint of

Communism, press and political comment on the country was invariably negative. In my opinion this was not fair judgment because in many ways conditions under Mao improved considerably, even though they may have still seemed primitive when compared to those in developed industrial nations.

I made five trips to China between 1972 and 1984. Since then, the country has undergone considerable change. I thus describe what it was like then, and not necessarily what it is today. In the new China that I found in the 1970s they made no secret of the fact that everyone had to undergo "political training." The powers that be held that the country belonged to the people and that within each organisation the members or workers must spend some time each week in study sessions. Visitors like me were seldom told the details of such meetings, but on being taken through various factories I often saw groups assembled for "worker education." In each neighbourhood, there was a residents' committee that similarly organised meetings for older people or those who did not or could not go to work. Everywhere, people were organised into small units, the members of which got to know each other intimately. These units probably formed a useful tool by which the government kept in touch with the lives and circumstances of the individual.

Critics might say there was some sinister purpose behind the system, but in practice it definitely had its good side. If a person became ill and was housebound, the committees would see to it that a neighbour did her shopping for her. If necessary, meals would be cooked and delivered to the invalid's home. Similarly, if a death occurred the children would be cared for. When a household had a relative staying with them, they were expected to inform the residents' committee so that arrangements could be made for extra food ration cards to be issued. In those days, basic necessities such as cereals (rice or flour) and inexpensive cloth were rationed, while even the smallest luxuries were virtually unobtainable or too expensive for the average person to afford. For the convenience of residents, suggestion boxes were set up at central points. Their contents were regularly emptied, discussed, and presumably acted upon by the local committee. From time to time, a committee member might visit a household to enquire how the occupants were getting on, frequently interceding in personal difficulties or disputes.

Soon after gaining power in 1949, the new government turned

its attention to the nation's well-being. It passed various health laws, including workers' insurance regulations, under which every factory, mine, or transport unit had to provide clinics or hospitals for their workers or make arrangements with other institutions or doctors to take care of them. The cost of treatment, medicines, surgery, and hospitalisation had to be paid for by each institution out of its own insurance fund. Workers paid a low registration fee and contributed a small sum towards the cost of their food. The worker's immediate family could enjoy these privileges at half the cost. Long-term patients, in accordance with their length of service, would still receive sick leave with pay, though sometimes it would be reduced to 60 per cent of the regular wage. If a worker's illness affected the family's livelihood, he would be given a subsidy. No matter how long the illness might last, the worker's job would be kept open for him. If he was injured at work, he would receive full pay plus 80 per cent of his food expenses. The same applied to women.

When a worker retired, he would continue to enjoy the benefits of public medical care for the rest of his life. Workers in state farms received the same protection as those employed in factories or mines. Workers in all other enterprises established by the state—such as people's organisations, institutions for cultural, athletic, health, or economic development, disabled veterans, teaching staff and students, and workers in commercial undertakings—all received public medical care. Staff in rural private schools came under a different type of health program called "co-operative medical care" in which each person paid a small annual fee. The workers received care for life, even after retirement. It was particularly gratifying to see that the policy still upheld family values and ties. Single children were not sent far from home, and all young people were granted two weeks of home leave with pay plus travel expenses. It was also fitting that an edict was issued to protect antiques or old *objets d'art*, which meant that they were not allowed out of the country without special permission.

As an educator I was particularly interested in the school system. Children entered primary school at the age of seven for a period of five years. This had been reduced from six years during the Cultural Revolution after some material considered repetitious was cut. Primary education was followed by secondary school (or "middle school," as it is called in China), the full course of which lasted five years. However, the majority of students finished junior middle school in three years and

were sent to work at the age of 15. These young people were given employment in factories, farms, shops, mines, and other predominantly manual activities, though they were first allowed to express their wish regarding where they would like most to be sent. A small proportion of them were selected to stay on for senior middle school.

In the mid-1960s, the so-called Cultural Revolution declared that the former system—under which a student could go straight from school to college, and then straight back to teach—was wrong. This meant that some teachers had never worked or gained practical knowledge of how plants are grown or goods produced. Consequently, junior middle school graduates were sent out into the world to give them an appreciation of honest toil in the service of their community. After they had worked for at least three years, if they wanted to go on for further studies at university or institutions for specialised training they had to go through four steps. First, they had to be in good health and show that they were interested in entering a certain institution. Second, workmates in their particular unit had to recommend them through comments on their character, ability, powers of leadership, and willingness to serve. Third, those in charge of the working unit had to endorse this recommendation. Finally, as the fourth requirement, the institution had to test the applicant. Should the candidate fail this test, the recommending unit was allowed to submit an alternative candidate. Much of this system came under central planning. Each year, after careful consideration by the national authorities, a decision was made as to how many students would be admitted to the institutions of higher learning. These numbers were then distributed to the various provinces, which allotted them via local district committees, secondary schools, factories, farms, communes, and other administrative units.

After the Cultural Revolution, the first large intake of university students began in 1970. Relatively few were admitted in 1971, but quite large numbers entered in 1972. Practically every province has its own university. At both the tertiary institutions I visited, the Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou and "Beida" (the name for Beijing University on the Yenching University campus), I was told that they were planning eventually to have a large student intake numbering approximately 10,000 for each institution. Both of these were comprehensive universities, which meant that they had most of the general arts and science faculties. In Beijing University there were 17 faculties and 64 specialities. In the arts faculties there were seven subjects: Chinese,

political philosophy, history, international politics, economics, law, and library science. The science group covered mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, geology and geography, geophysics (which they called "Physics of the Earth"), and wireless telegraphy. Foreign languages included English, French, German, Spanish, and Russian, together with eleven Oriental languages for a total of sixteen altogether.

University professors received relatively high salaries. Some got 345 yuan a month, and the minimum was 150. Chairman Mao's salary was said to be 460 yuan. Professors never retired. When they grew old, they were given lighter duties and allowed to be absent from work if unable to attend, but they were welcome to return to the institution when able to do so. They received full salary until the end of their lives, unlike factory and other workers who normally received a 70 per cent pension. If poor health forced them out of service before retirement age, they received 60 per cent, while for short illnesses they received full pay. University students did not pay anything for tuition or medical care, but were given a small allowance of about 20 yuan a month that was said to be sufficient for their food (usually at canteens) and incidental expenses. If they had worked for five years or more before returning to become students, their factory or place of work continued to pay their wages. Most university staff and students lived in or around the campus.

Many factories built dormitories for their workers. Single people were housed free of charge, while married families were charged a small rent. Many were allowed to stay on in these quarters even after retirement. The majority of factories ran canteens where food could be eaten on the premises or taken home. Even uncooked food could be bought in the canteen and taken home if a family wished occasionally to do the cooking themselves. Factories, communes, mines, and the like all had their own medical clinics. Cases too difficult for them to handle were referred to the larger hospitals. Welfare work was decentralised and taken care of by separate units, each familiar with its particular recipients and their problems and knowing how best to apply for help on their behalf. Old people without families and the destitute were provided with the "five protections" - food, clothing, accommodation, medical care, and funeral expenses.

Social welfare work was well organised. One example was the Children's Palace. There were several of these institutions in Shanghai and in many of the other cities I visited. Every day after school more

than 1,000 children used the one in Shanghai, which was the first to be established by Madame Sun Yat-sen, otherwise known by her maiden name, Vice-Chairman Soong Ching Ling, as is the general rule nowadays for married women. The Children's Palace building was impressive. Upon enquiry I was told it had been the home of the Kadoorie family, one of Hong Kong's best known Jewish families who among other things founded the territory's Peninsula Hotel. The house had been called Marble Hall because a great deal of that stone had been used in its construction and finish. Some children went to the Palace twice a week, others once, and yet others would visit in groups, particularly if they were watching a performance in the little auditorium. Group activities included Western and Chinese drawing, painting, and instrumental or vocal music taught individually or in groups. The children were even provided with violins to take home for practice. They were also encouraged to learn paper cutting and embroidery.

The sciences were not neglected; there were groups studying the stars from an observatory, making large toy boats to sail in a special tank, and building aeroplanes to fly on the lawn. The children even made transistor radios that they were allowed to take home to their families. They also made simple wireless transmission sets and practiced sending messages on them. There were many forms of sport and physical activity such as table tennis, ballet dancing, folk dancing, and various kinds of Chinese boxing. One of these I did not agree with was a basic form of military training. When I was visiting I saw a group of girls lying prone on the ground aiming toy rifles at targets. When I asked my guide whether it was good for young people to be so military-minded, I was told that they had to be prepared to defend their country. They asked me why I thought their northern neighbour, Russia, should have her troops lined up in Siberia instead of back in Moscow. This was fairly typical of the answers I received everywhere when I asked about the sense of constant military preparedness throughout the country.

The Palace was typical of the extra-curricular activities widely provided in China, generally free of charge, through schools, youth groups, and especially the Little Red Army, which the children regard as a special privilege to join. Some of these groups were similar to the scouts, cubs, and brownies in the West, though I do not think there were any groups called by those names. Chairman Mao put great emphasis on the important role of young people, whom he called the real heirs of



the country. One of his poems expressing this sentiment was frequently quoted. As soon as they entered the gates of a primary school, most young people were confronted with eight Chinese characters, which can be freely translated as, "Learn well, practice well, daily aim high." This may have been regarded as Communist indoctrination by the West, but such idealistic mottoes have been used in China for thousands of years.

At one of the housing estates I was shown a recreation room for retired persons where the elderly were provided with periodicals, magazines and daily papers, chess and other games, a radio, and a television set. This room served as a sort of clubhouse where older citizens could meet and socialise. Some retired people could obtain light work within their physical capabilities, such as sweeping the streets or public parks or selling lollipops in the parks. Public parks were an important part of city life and were constantly in use by those wishing to take a stroll or sit in relative peace and quiet. Naturally, they were popular among the older generation. In one of the communes I visited outside Beijing, we were taken to a home for the aged, the name of which particularly impressed me and reinforced my belief that even under Communist rule China had not lost its cultural links with the past. The institution was called "Respect the Aged." It did not simply use the old expression, to "nourish" the aged. It thus indicated the fulfillment of the Confucian principle that it is insufficient merely to nourish one's elders, for one must respect them as well. This place for elderly people without families had a very happy, friendly atmosphere in which the elders were made to feel really welcome and at home.

The government was proud of the way it had improved the lot of old people, particularly those who were poor or destitute. In Nanjing we were taken to a place called "The Village of the Five Old People" that had been the home of rickshaw pullers, junk sellers, shoeshine boys, and beggars. It had been a terribly unhealthy place, without running water and electricity, both of which the new government immediately installed as soon as they "liberated" Nanjing from the Japanese. The villagers were encouraged to do something to cleanse and renovate the place, and within a couple of years they won a special banner from Chairman Mao at a health exhibition for being a model village. The swamps had been cleared, roads made, and buildings put up—including schools, nurseries, clinics, shops, and small factories—so that today it has become a good neighbourhood and a place to be proud of.

Earlier one man had had eight children, seven of whom died in one year during a typhoid epidemic. Now the flies and mosquitoes have been eliminated. In Beijing there was a similar place called the Shih-sah-hai that had once been little more than an unhealthy swamp. The people were encouraged to drain the swamp and dig up the remaining mud to use as fertiliser on their farms. They then refilled the depression with fresh water from the western hills to form an artificial lake that became a swimming pool in the summer and skating rink in the winter. I went there with my niece, her daughter, and other children, and I took some movie pictures of the people skating.

From a western standpoint, under Chairman Mao the Chinese were continuously bombarded by propaganda regarding work targets and achievements under the Communist system, which exhorted the masses to keep their shoulders to the wheel. Much of the encouraging was done through the mass media. Captioned photographs of successful industrial and farming schemes were displayed on large bulletin boards in glass cases outside public buildings. This enabled pedestrians to study them at their leisure, and the bulletin boards usually attracted small crowds of viewers. Every day on the radio there were accounts from all round the country of factories, communes, and even individuals that had reached some manufacturing or farming target or simply made a selfless contribution to the common welfare. Unquestionably this gave people a sense of nationalism and pride in their work. Individual interests were made subordinate to the welfare of the group—as is well illustrated in the opera *Lung Jang Sung*, in which a few fields are flooded in order to save the crops of a larger area.

In the medical field, China was trying to put its traditional medicines on a more established footing than before. Acupuncture was being used in new ways and herbal medicines were being keenly studied. Chinese medicine was thus taking its place beside the Western variety. Some of the results were stunning, with major surgery being conducted on patients whose only anaesthetic was acupuncture. Although lacking some of the sophisticated technical aids common in U.S. hospitals, Chinese doctors made international headlines with some of their work, for example by re-grafting the severed limbs or fingers of accident victims. My good friend, Dr. M.K. Yue, was superintendent of a large teaching hospital in Hangzhou and had himself performed one of the first of these surgical procedures.

Chinese doctors were using traditional methods for all manner of

medical treatment, and acupuncture was given as an alternative to conventional anaesthetic for quite severe forms of surgery. An example of this was a Caesarean operation performed on a woman on the second day of the Lunar New Year in 1973 when I visited the International Peace Hospital in Shanghai. Madame Sun Yat-sen—whom I had known since the late 1930s when the Sino-Japanese War had broken out and she was living in Hong Kong—had first drawn my attention to this hospital because it had been established partly with a Stalin Peace Prize she had won. Originally it was only a small clinic, but it had grown into a six-storey, well-equipped and well-staffed hospital taking care of factory women and infants in the area. In addition, difficult cases and premature babies from hospitals and clinics farther away were also sent there. The hospital had special equipment such as baby incubators, and the staff were well trained and dedicated.

On my second trip in 1978, I invited Dr and Mrs M.K. Yue to Shanghai to stay a week in my hotel, and we all went to visit that hospital. On my previous visit in 1973, I had met a Red Guard (whose husband was also a Red Guard), who had already had a baby girl by Caesarean operation and was again due for delivery. This time I saw her lying on the operating table with one acupuncture needle sticking out of the tip of her nose and another one stuck into the skin of her right temple. Two women gynaecologists were operating upon her assisted by nurses, and I was allowed to watch the operation from beginning to end wearing a sterilised cap, mask, gown, and white canvas shoes. I was encouraged to chat with the woman, who told me she felt no pain whatever and intended to limit her family to two. She was naturally delighted when the baby turned out to be a boy.

It was in the 1970s, when I was making educational visits to China, that Chinese traditional medicine began to receive favourable publicity in America. Even in my adopted hometown, San Diego, many people were beginning to benefit from acupuncture, herbal medicine, and "hands-on healing." I had suffered from arthritis since the days when I lived in the damp climate of the Peak in Hong Kong, and the condition had not been helped by the damp London climate during my student days. However, I was not overly troubled by the affliction until the winter of 1980. That year on Christmas Eve, while I was staying with friends, I had an attack of influenza that lasted about three weeks. Seemingly as a result, my arthritis began acting up. The trouble did not go away, so when I went to China in 1981 and 1982 I seized every

available opportunity to obtain local treatment in the places I visited. Sometimes they worked well. For instance, an acupuncture doctor in Guangzhou gave me an injection in one of the acupuncture points in my left shin and managed to stop the pain for several months. The following year I tried to find that doctor once again, but did not succeed. In Beijing I went to both the Chinese acupuncturist and a western-style doctor, but did not get any permanent relief. In Hangzhou I went to the nationally famous Research Centre for Chinese Medicine, and the head of the department personally gave me acupuncture treatment a few times a week for several weeks. He explained to me that in chronic cases like mine they can provide only relief but not a cure, so I decided I just had to learn to live with my various ailments.

In 1981 when I was sightseeing in Kunming, I tripped over a hosepipe while backing up to photograph a peach tree in blossom in a public garden. I broke my right wrist and immediately asked my guide to take me to the local hospital. It was in the late afternoon and the head of department had gone home, but he obligingly returned and set the fracture for me. He used a special method that he assured me was the best way. The hand was set at right angles to the forearm and he made me promise to go to a surgeon to have it seen to again after ten days. For a while I was severely restricted in mobility, but everyone was kind and helpful. The hotel found an amah to help me dress and undress as well as take a bath. The morning following the accident I was still able to keep to my schedule and went alone to the Stone Forest. Later I took a boat ride down the Yangtse where they were just beginning to build the now famous dam. I had no guide on the boat, but fellow passengers helped me with my baggage and anything else I needed. Then when I caught the train I was given an upper berth because the lower ones were all taken. But a fellow passenger gallantly gave up his lower berth to me so that I would not need to climb. The other passengers helped load and unload my bags, and everywhere I was treated to demonstrations of kindness and friendliness, which is an innate characteristic of the Chinese.

It seemed to me that the true feelings of the people are still apparent irrespective of whatever shade of government might be in charge of the country. In this case my Communist hosts might have been surprised had they realised that I regarded the help I was given as a manifestation of the old Chinese saying: "Two persons make benevolence." This was one of the tenets Master Chiu had taught me as

a child. I reached Shanghai ten days after my accident. A doctor friend of my cousin there X-rayed the fracture and told me it was setting nicely. A couple of days later I reached Hangzhou, and my old and dear friend Dr M.K. Yue immediately took me to see his colleague Dr T.C. Li, an orthopedic surgeon. He removed the plaster and reset the wrist without putting the hand at an angle. It set perfectly, or at least functionally, matching the left wrist that I had previously fractured in Scotland. Both wrists look a little crooked but they have given me no bother since.

Despite its attempt to bring China into the modern world, the Communist regime was generally protective of the country's history, and many archaeological sites were unearthed during the 1970s and early 1980s. One site outside Xian in Shensi province, where the finds date back 6,000 years, seems to come out of a textbook on the civilisation of man. There are primitive pottery artifacts and primitive graves for single, double, or multiple burials. Sometimes articles had been buried with the bodies, presumably for use by the deceased in the afterlife. Only part of the large site has been excavated, with the rest being left for future explorers and the benefit of improved excavation and dating techniques in the future.

I was especially interested to learn that the site had produced 113 symbols that can be classified into 22 categories and may have been the precursors of the written Chinese language. Close by there is a museum full of interesting exhibits, with many of the objects looking similar to those still used today but made of different materials, such as bone needles and fish hooks or clay pots and pans. None of these historical objects can be taken out of the country without special permission, although there was (and still is) a black market trade through Hong Kong to the outside world. Chinese artifacts sometimes fetched high prices on the international markets, but those caught smuggling the goods out of China risked a quick trial and death by firing squad, or more often a single bullet in the back of the head.

Having been an active supporter of equality for women since my adolescence, I was particularly interested in the special attention given by the government to the care of women workers. Throughout the new China there was a policy of complete equality of the sexes as far as pay was concerned. Many women were employed in heavy industry—my niece worked in an ironworks—yet they were normally not assigned to the heaviest jobs. For instance, women did not work underground in the mines or do night shifts when they drove a taxi. Even so, they could be

seen driving trucks and working in numerous occupations normally not associated with women. It was not unusual to see them carrying heavy loads on building sites, rowing sampans, or doing manual work in the fields.

Family planning was officially encouraged, and late marriages were actively advocated, with 23 or 25 the suggested age for women and as late as 30 or more for men. Contraceptives were supplied free of charge by the factory or other place of work. When there was an unwanted pregnancy, an abortion could be obtained if both parents, or sometimes just the mother alone, wanted it. There was no charge for this, and the woman would be given leave without losing any pay. Both Chinese and western methods are used for contraception and abortion, depending on the health of the woman and the stage of her pregnancy. During my first trip in 1972, couples were encouraged to have only two children. Many women told me that even though they had only two daughters and no son, they still had undergone the operation to prevent them from having any more children. Many men had themselves sterilised, and condoms were supplied free of charge. I once walked into a Chinese herbal drug store and saw a little basket on a counter near the entrance full of contraceptives. When I asked about them, I was told that the people could pick them up free of charge if they wanted them.

Although the government's policy was to limit the size of the population by controlling the size of families and eradicating unwanted births, pregnant women could expect favourable treatment if they decided to have the child. As soon as a female worker became pregnant, she was encouraged to go early to see a doctor for prenatal care. After that she was given time off to return for regular check-ups at monthly, fortnightly, or weekly intervals. She would normally do this a minimum of six times. From the seventh month of her pregnancy, a woman was expected to work only seven hours a day instead of the normal eight, with no reduction in pay. There was an allowance of 56 days paid maternity leave: 14 days before and 42 days after childbirth. If the baby was born before the 14 days were up, the total leave was still 56 days, and if the labour was delayed the mother received the full 42 days after delivery. If she had twins or a difficult labour, then she was given extra leave up to 70 days in total. These were excellent conditions.

Most factories and places of work ran nurseries for their

workers. These charged a nominal fee, but the workers were still at liberty to arrange for a grandparent or neighbour to take care of the infant and avoid having to pay for the service. Mothers were allowed two periods off work each day to go and nurse the baby, with sufficient time so that the mother could spend a half-hour session with the child. Breast-feeding was encouraged, but even when the babies were bottle-fed, the mothers were expected to do this themselves because the special attention of a mother was considered good for a baby. For similar reasons, mothers were required to take their children home from the nursery on their weekly day off from work. Government crèches are staffed by trained nurses and assistants, and those we saw were clean and healthy. Many factories also ran their own day nurseries for children of different ages if they were not being taken to government institutions in the neighbourhood.

There was a reasonable charge to cover the cost of food, laundry, and mending, with the parents providing the clothing if a child was kept at a nursery overnight on a weekly basis. Children were trained, educated, and cared for in the nurseries and kindergartens. The system thus provided for all their needs until they could enter school at the age of seven. At that time the mothers would be freed from child care and attendant housework so that they could again fully participate in being part of a production team. This was regarded as the duty and privilege of every able-bodied young person. Those fortunate enough to have a mother, mother-in-law, or sometimes father to do the baby-sitting regarded themselves as being extra-lucky, because this enabled each and every member of the family to make his or her maximum contribution.

My second trip to China spanned two months, from mid-September to mid-November 1978. This time I stopped only one night in Guangzhou before going straight to Shanghai. There I was joined by my good friends Dr and Mrs M.K. Yue, since I did not have time to visit their home in Hangzhou. I took them to the International Peace Hospital, which had been extended since my first trip in 1973, and we also visited an exhibit of China's industrial products that M.K. felt would be interesting. They then accompanied me on my first visit to the Shanghai Children's Welfare Institute, where I was most impressed with the work being done by the deputy superintendent, Miss Yang Jie-chung, and her staff. They took care of several hundred severely mentally and physically

handicapped children.

After we left Shanghai, all three of us took a coastal boat to Tsingtao, where we had an all too brief day of simple relaxation. Mrs Yue and I were great friends. I always referred to her as C.C., the initials of her Chinese names, or as Cornelia, her chosen English name. We were like sisters, with no secrets between us. On that balmy day we took off our shoes and stockings and enjoyed walking along the beach with the cool, damp sand getting between our toes. M.K. was more sedate and walked farther inshore. Unfortunately, we only had time to spend one night in Tsingtao, then they had to return south to Hangzhou by train while I proceeded to Beijing, arriving on the evening of September 27th.

The next morning, my travel agency had scheduled me to visit Chairman Mao's mausoleum and the museum containing Premier Zhou Enlai's relics, both of which were adjacent to Tiananmen Square. That evening, I had an invitation to attend a banquet for overseas Chinese visitors in the Great Hall of the People. I had all along been told to expect this. Just before the dinner, we were asked to congregate at one end of the large hall. Soon thereafter, Chinese government officials filed past us clapping their hands as a gesture of welcome. It was a distinguished party that included Mr Deng Xiaoping; Madame Deng Ying-chao, the widow of Zhou Enlai; Mr Liao Cheng-chi, the Commissioner for Overseas Affairs; and other leading dignitaries. We all clapped in response. Naturally, our seats at the banquet table were assigned. I think this must have been done with some care and consideration, because I was seated next to and chatted with an officer from the Ministry of Education. I tried to put in a good word for special education and later used his name and address whenever I wanted to contact the ministry about that subject. He would pass the document on to the proper colleague and department.

I was pleasantly surprised when invited to another banquet the follow evening—the eve of Chinese National Day, which falls on October 1. China annually gives a banquet on the evening of September 30th to entertain the diplomatic corps and other foreign guests. It was a rare honour to be included. I thought it was sensible of the organisers to serve only cold dishes, as obviously it was almost impossible to serve hot dishes to a crowd some 4,000 strong. At each table there were two hosts, the principal one with his back to the platform and the other facing it. I was placed next to my table's second host, while Mr and Mrs Dick Lee and their son from Hong Kong also sat at our table. We were



provided with the Chinese text of the speech of welcome that was to be given later in the evening. During the course of the dinner professional cameramen took photographs of the gathering from the gallery, which I assumed were for official records. To my delight, the next morning I happened to glance at the *People's Daily* newspaper and there was a photo showing part of the banquet where I was seated. Looking closely I could identify myself. I ordered half a dozen copies as souvenirs for myself, family, and friends.

A couple of days after that banquet I was told that Vice-President Soong Ching Ling (Madame Sun Yat-sen) had invited me to tea at her home in Beijing that Saturday afternoon. When I arrived, an attendant showed me through several rooms of the house, which my host later told me she used for film shows that she put on for friends. Madame Sun welcomed me and introduced the two daughters of a good friend of hers, who were studying in Beijing and living with her. There was also another young lady present who had recently come home to China from abroad, and she spoke English quite well. It was an intimate little gathering. I very much appreciated the honour, the pleasure, and the inspiration of having been invited to have tea with such a wonderful person. I talked to her about my visit to the Shanghai Children's Welfare Institute, and she encouraged me to do whatever I could to advocate the expansion of special education in China. She asked me for details about the remainder of my trip. I told her that among other places I planned to go to Guilin on my way south. She reminded me to be sure to take the day cruise down the Li River, which she assured me would be leisurely and beautiful. We two did most of the talking, and the young ladies only answered us when spoken to. For tea she served both Chinese dim sum and a few western-style cakes and tidbits. We drank plain Chinese tea, and the five of us sat around a small rectangular table in a room decorated simply with tasteful pieces of furniture.

During my second visit to the new China I decided to take a ten-day tour for myself so that I could see some of the showplaces the Communist government advertised through trade fairs and exhibitions and on posters plastered across walls and hoardings. These were all held up as examples of success achieved by the people through selfless endeavour. It was strong meat for party propaganda, and I wanted to see it for myself. In 1972 two of the most common slogans displayed on walls and hoardings in China were "For Agriculture Learn from Dazai" and "For Industry Learn from Da-qing," although several years later

Dazai had lost much of its glory. The success of this mountainous rural area was legendary. Apparently during the 1960s it had been in difficult circumstances, having been badly affected by failed crops and atrocious weather. However, the people pulled themselves together and dealt with their problems one by one. They terraced their land carefully and built fish ponds at the top of each hillock so that there would be more water for irrigation, as well as some fresh fish to add to their food supply. They sun-baked their own bricks during the day and continued the process of heating with simple wood fires at night.

I arrived at Dazai in a hired car (costing 50 cents Chinese a kilometre) at night and was immediately impressed and pleasantly surprised by the general well-kept feeling of the place. In this case propaganda was certainly based on truth—the local people did set an example of self-help and prosperity. They selected good seed, took care of the crops carefully, and above all worked extremely hard. Consequently the crops earned a good yield. Many people were involved in supplementary industries such as beekeeping, rearing "black-boned" chickens (which are supposed to be extra-nourishing and fetch better prices), and finally herding mountain goat on the hillsides, all to bring in extra meat to sell or to consume. The hard work done with improved agricultural methods and farm implements, coupled with a spirit of optimism and perseverance, produced excellent results. Within a few years the entire neighbourhood flourished and became richer. As a result Chairman Mao set them up as a model for rural communities all around the country, hence the slogan that appeared all across the nation.

My next stop was the Red Flag Canal, which had become the subject of a moving story of worker heroism. I was told that the northwest corner of Henan province, near the provincial boundary and the Tai Hang mountain range, often suffered from severe droughts. One day at a meeting of local farmers, one of them summed up the situation: "If you walk northwards from here and almost reach our border with Hebei province, you will find a river, the Jiang He, that has plenty of water. But we are separated by all these mountains. The problem is how to get at some of that water," he said. This was the spark that eventually convinced the farmers to build a series of irrigation tunnels through the rock of the Tai Hang mountain range. They were without modern tools or equipment and had to undertake this major civil engineering work using hand-powered tools, the sweat of their backs, and rugged

determination. Most of the tunnelling was done with hammer and chisel.

There are pictures showing what the farmers did and the dangers they surmounted. Once the work began in earnest they had two teams, one at each end of the tunnel. One of the highlights of the project was when they eventually met in the middle. The conditions under which they worked and their final achievement were awe-inspiring, to say the least. Pictures show them hanging on homemade rope slings down the sides of high cliffs, working in teams of two with one holding a huge chisel in both hands while the other hammered it into the rock. Similar methods were used within the tunnel, where if anything conditions were even more arduous. Despite all the hardships, water eventually flowed through the mountain to emerge from the cliffs. They called it the Hero Cave and the canal that led out of it was called the Hero Canal. One of the branches was named the Red Flag Canal, in honour of the Communist national emblem.

When I first read about this project, I wondered if it really could be as impressive as they said, but it was. The Party evidently realised that many people would want to go and have a look at the place where the water came out of a mountain, so they built a path around the hillside with a railing at the outside edge to protect visitors. The water is a perennial flow because it comes from the Jiang He, a substantial river. The canal divides and subdivides into a network of channels reaching out to a large area of Henan province. It also provides a source of water power to generate electricity for a population that hitherto had depended on oil or kerosene lamps. Electricity, of course, was also employed for industrial purposes.

The new China was seen by the West as a cold and totalitarian Communist state that threatened the very existence of so-called free democratic societies, but this was not a balanced view of either the country or its unique social and political system. The existence of Communist Party doctrinaire politics should not be allowed to overshadow the fact that many people, and probably the majority, saw themselves as pioneers leading China from under the yoke of feudalism. They were, in many ways, more Chinese than Communist in the way they went about things.

Although Beijing was originally the capital of both the nation and the province of Hebei, by the time I arrived the town of Shihjiazhuang had become the provincial capital instead and thus warranted a visit. This became the last resting place of Dr Norman Bethune, the famous

Canadian doctor who came to China as a volunteer, became good friends with Chairman Mao, and did excellent and dedicated work among the soldiers during the turbulent days of the Japanese occupation and the rise of Communism. He finally contracted septicemia in the battlefield and died. He was buried in the cemetery at Shihjiazhuang, where at the entrance is a larger-than-life statue of him in white marble. Communist or not, China has always paid tribute to its friends. There was also a hospital named after the doctor on whose grounds the authorities had set up a nursery garden where Chinese herbs were grown. Medical students were taught to identify these herbs and learn their individual properties. They were told that they should constantly be on the lookout for herbs whenever they were in the countryside or in the hills. They were encouraged to gather them for medicine shops and, if necessary, to instruct the proprietors in their use.

The second institution I visited was an orphanage for children who had lost both parents in the Tangshan earthquake, a disaster of immense proportions. I was told that when the people of Shihjiazhuang heard of the decision to set up an orphanage in their city, they immediately got together to give the children an enthusiastic welcome. People donated furniture, foodstuffs, clothing, and toys, and those who could came to work as volunteers. They tried in every way to make the children feel really welcome. It was explained to the youngsters that the townspeople would try to be their substitute parents and give them support, protection, and affection. From the second summer after the quake, the children were taken to visit Tangshan for their summer holidays so that they could meet their dead parents' relatives and friends and maintain family bonds. The older ones were given the opportunity to help rebuild Tangshan. I can vouch for the fact that the staff at the orphanage were wholly dedicated to the children's welfare. This was exemplified by the spirit of well-being and optimism that seemed to affect all their young charges.

Zhengzhou was on my agenda primarily because of its importance as the crossing place of the two main railway lines linking the whole country, from north to south and east to west. As soon as this city was designated as the new provincial capital of Henan, the authorities redesigned the layout of the central district, arranging it geometrically with wide avenues converging towards the "Two Seven Memorial Pagoda" at the centre. This pagoda, together with a memorial hall and garden, was built to commemorate the nationwide strike

begun on February 7, 1923, by the workers of the Peking-Hankow railway stationed in this city. The railway administration at the time had badly treated its workers, a factor that was instrumental in causing workers all over the country to strike in sympathy. The strike was so widespread that it even extended to the chauffeurs and bus and taxi drivers in Hong Kong. Hence my sister Eva and I had firsthand experience of the inconvenience it caused. At that time we both drove the family car in Hong Kong, although she was infinitely more skillful behind the wheel than I was.

The pagoda in Zhengzhou was used as a museum to describe the revolutionary history of the new government. It had several storeys, each concentrating on some topic or period. I went by the escalator to the top floor and by walking each floor and working my way down, I saw all the exhibits that particularly interested me. My guide followed me around, supplying any additional information I needed. In 1978 I still did not feel any arthritic problems, so I went through the pagoda carefully and found it of great interest. I recall that it was a bright, sunny day outside and that the streets were divided by rows of big wutong trees, each with an abundant foliage of huge, bright green leaves that provided cool shade. Traffic was well organised, with each type of vehicle—buses, cars, and bicycles—having its proper assigned lane. Pedestrians had the pavements, of course. I believe those were the best traffic conditions I saw in the new China during the combined fifteen months I spent in six trips.

We also went to another museum that had large frescoes on the walls, each several meters square, depicting how the new government had been trying to control the Yellow River floods from its source to the estuary. Again it was a form of propaganda, yet I was impressed. Ever since I was a child, I had heard of the devastation caused by the Yellow River floods. Now the government had been able to control them. Another day I was driven out to the river itself, and it was indeed awe-inspiring to see this gigantic inland body of water at close quarters. It was very muddy because of the silt it was carrying from the lush lands through which it had passed. My guide told me that we were standing not far from the spot where Chairman Mao had originally proposed taming the Yellow River during one of his inspection visits. The Chairman, a cult figure, was personally accredited with being the guiding force behind numerous schemes across the length and breadth of the country. Others worked on his ideas and made them come to

fruition; he was the visionary, they the architects and builders.

On both my first and second trips I was in Beijing when the cold weather set in, and I developed bronchitis on both occasions. Later in Hong Kong and even in San Diego I experienced the same problem. Many friends told me I should try the Chinese fruit called "lo han guo," which grows in the Guilin area. I did see some being dried there, while others were being made into an infusion that is much more convenient to use. I bought some and found that it did seem to help prevent the bronchitis. Since then, I have taken a hot drink with one lump of the infusion every morning. This is sold in green paper containers with a picture and the name of the fruit on top and a dozen little boxes inside, each holding two lumps of the dried fruit. They are available in most Chinese stores in Britain or America, as well as in Hong Kong and mainland China.

When I returned to Guangzhou I told my travel agents that I would like to have a look at conditions in south China, especially the area around Toishan where many of my friends in San Diego came from. I wanted to find out what drove so many of them to leave their homes and families and travel all the way to America even when there was no more gold to be mined nor railways to be built, both of which had provided the original stimulus in the previous century. The China Travel Service told me that it would not be easy to arrange a trip unless I was prepared to travel as the local people do, namely by bus, with simple accommodation. Otherwise it would be terribly expensive if they had to order a special car to take me. Actually, I was more than glad to travel with the locals.

I boarded the bus early one morning and found that the seats were narrower and set closer to one another than in American or even Hong Kong buses. They crammed in as many passengers as possible. The roofs of the buses were used to carry mail bags, which meant that each passenger had to put personal luggage by his feet or on his lap. It was a decidedly uncomfortable way to travel, but since I was travelling light I managed. The route crossed several tributaries of the Pearl River, few of which had bridges in those days. From time to time all the passengers were thus asked to get off the bus to allow it to be driven to a ferry, while they walked on. In no time at all, the boat would cross to the other side, the passengers would all climb aboard, and off it would go again. There was a stop at a cheap but clean restaurant where most people bought lunch.

When I arrived I spent two nights in a little inn at Yung Kei. My amah Hing Jeh's brother lived in Yung Kei. I was familiar with him and his circumstances because I had often written letters for her to send to him. He was delighted to have me visit his home and insisted that I stay for dinner. The next day I visited the little town of Shun Tak (Cantonese pronunciation), which I had heard about as a child from the family amahs and from people working at our Tung Ying Hok Po Farm at Sheung Shui in Hong Kong's New Territories. I went to the silk district to see the silk filatures at work, which had not changed much since the days of my youth.

The following morning I took another bus to Toishan, where I stayed for several days in a small hotel that was quite good. The authorities there explained to me that many emigrants had been leaving Toishan because in the olden days there was always a problem with the water supply. Conditions were bad as the area fluctuated between drought and flood, the latter being caused by regular summer typhoons that invariably destroyed all the crops. When the new government came into power, it decided to solve the problem by building a huge dam across the entrance to a valley formed by several mountains. The result was the Dai Lung Dung Reservoir. When I went home to San Diego and told an old Chinese resident that I had visited the dam, he told me that in his day the area was a robbers' retreat. By turning it into a large reservoir, the government had solved a problem of law and order as well as the water shortage. I went out to see the place and found that the dam had been raised since it was first built. Thus it could store even more water and irrigate a greater area of the surrounding farm country. There was a complex system of rivers and canals to disperse the water over a wide agricultural area, which had brought a certain degree of prosperity to the farmers.

I was also shown some schools in the area and was sorry to see the severe shortage of modern science equipment and the overcrowding of classes, even in the secondary school. When they asked me for suggestions, I did my best to answer them with understanding, although I was not in a position to be of much practical help. However, from time to time it pleased me to hear that many overseas Chinese would send funds and equipment home for the schools in their native districts. Thus conditions steadily improved. The central and local government authorities were not idle, of course. However, with such a large country and huge population, all these shortcomings would take time to solve. In

my opinion, their very existence simply proved the urgent and constant need for population control, which the Chinese government has tried to tackle.

During my later trips to China I went to the province of Szechuan and visited the cities of Chengdu and Chongqing (formerly Chungking). Chengdu is famous for its cultural connections—particularly the "Sage of Poets," Du Fu, and several places referred to in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. This epic story was taught to me many years ago by my childhood tutor, Master Chiu. Consequently I found the visit more meaningful. Chongqing had political significance for both the Nationalists and the Communists when it was the capital of China at the end of the Sino-Japanese War. During those days people had to climb hundreds of steps from the pier at the riverside up to the town. The Communist government replaced these with a good road, along which new buildings such as hotels and guest houses had sprung up. I made a third stop in this province to board the river craft that cruises along the Yangtse, so that I could see the three gorges and simply enjoy the boat ride. This brought me to Wuhan, which is formed by the three cities of Hankow, Hanyang, and Wuchang. Wuhan is important because the Chinese Revolution had first broken out there in 1911, and it featured strongly in the early history of the present regime.

I also took a trip out to the northeastern provinces. I was given special permission to see the rebuilding of Tangshan because I had worked there and had former colleagues in the vicinity who were very glad to see me again. The people in authority also gave me a detailed and vivid account of some of the things that had happened during the terrible earthquake that "shook the world." One of the stories that most moved me was what the soldiers had done the morning of the disaster. They had been stationed near the railway that came from Beijing and Tianjin. As soon as they heard news of the earthquake, they took the first train to Tangshan so that they could help in the rescue work. The train had to stop long before it reached its intended destination because the tracks had been dislodged and twisted by the quake. However, the soldiers alighted and ran along on foot until after a couple of hours they reached the scene of the disaster, where they immediately did whatever they could to help.

Many miners had been trapped underground, and the soldiers risked their own lives to dig them out. Thus the number of casualties was considerably reduced. I was also told that one group of soldiers,



taking a tanker of water by rail to Tangshan, would not slake their own thirst from the supply during a journey of many hours, preferring to wait until after the earthquake victims had been given sustenance first. During those first weeks, soldiers from all over the country were sent to Tangshan to help in the work of rescue, rehabilitation, and construction of temporary shelters, since housing had been devastated. Many of the temporary shelters were merely sheds made from sections of wall that had been left standing, to which they attached tarpaulins or metal sheeting to provide rudimentary cover. These at least gave the survivors somewhere to avoid the worst weather and get a little rest at night. Some of these shelters were still standing when I visited the site in 1981. However, by that time reconstruction was well in hand, and some multi-storey residential and factory buildings had already been built. Present-day Tangshan is a well-designed, modern industrial city.

I had promised M.K. and C.C. to go back to Hangzhou and have some acupuncture treatment at the Chinese hospital for herbal doctors, which I did, but to no great avail. Unfortunately, M.K. had suffered a stroke a couple of days before his 80th birthday and was taken to the hospital where he was still superintendent. Needless to say, he was given excellent care. His second daughter Yu Yuan, who is also called Gwen, visited her father at the same time. She had obtained her scholarship at Monmouth College in the United States, from which both her mother and her aunt had obtained their Master's degrees. Gwen travelled down to Hangzhou from Beijing, where she had been working, to be with her parents. I stayed in my hotel and spent part of each day catching up on my writing on an excellent typewriter provided by the management for guests. Every afternoon, when I dropped in to visit M.K., I found a rickshaw puller who was glad to take me to the hospital each day at the appointed time. The journey past the lake where the lotus blossoms were in full bloom was a rare treat.

Eventually the time came to leave, and it was then that M.K. told me that Gwen had decided to leave China with me. He also said cryptically that he was glad she had finally made the decision to leave. At first I thought that we would travel together, but I later discovered this was not possible. Gwen could not travel with me on the same train from Guangzhou to Hong Kong. Because she was leaving China for the first time, she was required to catch a slow train to the border town of Shenzhen, where she would be screened by customs and immigration officers before proceeding to Hong Kong. My ticket had already been

booked, and my friends persuaded me to go on my train while another friend accompanied Gwen. I met her train when it arrived in Kowloon and found that everything had gone smoothly for her.

## Special Education in China

**M**y trips into the new China were not used merely for collecting information for my lectures in the United States; they also gave me the opportunity to learn more about the country's education system. I was most interested to see whether it provided the prospect of better living to the disadvantaged, so the story of one young girl was particularly moving. Miss Wu Dihong was born in Nanjing in 1967 without any arms. Her father and other relatives were loathe to tell her mother about the armless baby, so when the child was three days old, they decided that their family would not be able to cope with it. They thought that she would be better left in the government's care. A friend of the family was therefore asked to take the baby and leave her outside the local orphanage. She was wrapped up in a bundle to which they affixed a piece of red paper giving her date and time of birth, which was necessary in Chinese tradition. A small packet of glucose was provided for her food, and she was left near an orphanage. Another friend kept watch until he saw the little bundle being picked up.

Six months later someone informed on the family, and the child was returned to them in accordance with government regulations prevailing at that time. Fortunately, the maternal grandfather happened to be visiting the family, and he offered to raise the child if the father paid for its keep. The arrangement was made without the knowledge of the mother. Later, she had a baby boy. When she wanted to bring him home to pay his respects to the maternal ancestors, word was immediately sent to the grandfather. The armless child was in the way,

so another friend was asked to take the unfortunate child away. He actually took her to Shanghai and left her on the low wall beside the Bund. He evidently hoped that she would be picked up by the municipal police and taken to a child care institution, which was exactly what happened.

Fortunately, she was sent to the Shanghai Children's Welfare Institute, where the deputy superintendent, Miss Yang Jie-zhong, and her staff took a special interest in the child. The baby girl soon learned to do all sorts of things with her feet. She could use them to hold chopsticks, feed herself, and even help feed the younger children around her. Gradually she learned to take care of herself and overcome her great handicap. The staff taught reading and writing to those children who could assimilate a little knowledge. Although they never really expected Wu Dihong to have a chance of going to school, they taught her to write her own name together with the most appropriate slogan of the time: "Long Live Chairman Mao." She stayed at the institute until 1978, when she reached the age of 11.

At that time, another informant told the institute that Wu Dihong had a family and identified them. So again, according to government regulations, she was sent home to her parents, who by then were living somewhere in greater Nanjing. I remember the mother telling me that the girl was brought home for the second time in 1978. As the mother of such an unfortunate child, she was terribly upset, thinking, as the Chinese saying goes, "That she must have done something wrong in her previous reincarnation." However, since Wu Dihong had already learnt to read and write a little and was keen to learn more, the parents tried to find a school that would accept her. They felt it would give her something to occupy her time. Her mother told me that she had to approach several schools before she could find one that would accept the child. The school that did eventually take her had been established by the Pukow commune, which is on the northern bank of the river opposite Nanjing near the famous new railway bridge across the Yangtse. To begin with she was put into the second grade, but she studied so hard that she was promoted year after year, despite her handicap. The whole family moved to live in the commune near the school, and the mother agreed to become the commune's part-time accountant among other duties. The father continued to work at a metal factory in Nanjing. By that time the family had three sons younger than Wu Dihong.

I first heard about the armless girl in September 1978 from Miss

Yang, her former superintendent, who was justly proud of all that the girl could manage despite her handicap. She showed me photographs of her soon after the girl had been sent home from the institute. I wondered how an ordinary worker's family would be able to cope with a child with such a disability and advised Miss Yang to write to Dr Wu Yifang, the former president of Ginling Women's College, telling her about Wu Dihong and asking if she could do anything to help the child. I had known Dr Wu during 1937 when we both worked in Nanjing. In 1972, during my first return to Nanjing, she was my guest at a small lunch party. She was then deputy governor of Jiangsu province, and we had chatted away together quite well. I felt certain that she would be willing and able to persuade the government at Nanjing to help Wu Dihong. In 1981, on my third trip to China, I returned to the Children's Welfare Institute and asked Miss Yang, who was still superintendent, if she had been able to contact Dr Wu about Dihong. I was quite surprised when she told me that she had not done anything about it. Upon reflection I later realised that she was probably highly impressed by Dr Wu's position and did not dare impose upon her. I decided that I would try to help the girl myself.

As fate would have it, an opportunity presented itself when I was in Hangzhou, where my host and hostess—Dr & Mrs M.K. Yue—were also friends of Dr Wu. One day Dr Yue informed me that Dr Wu had arrived in town to pay her respects at the grave of her maternal grandparents. So my host arranged an appointment for the three of us to call on her. I was thus able to tell her the story of Wu Dihong, and she promised to see what she could do for the child. I arranged to take Dihong to see her in Nanjing on May 4 and wrote ahead to my travel agents to locate the family and ask the parents to wait for me. On the appointed day, I ordered a car immediately after breakfast and went with my guide direct to Dihong's school to take her and her mother back to the hotel where I was staying. There she demonstrated to Dr Wu how skilled she had become with her feet. Later, I had the hotel provide her and her mother with some lunch and in the early afternoon took her to the office of the Provincial Civic Affairs Department, where the officials were expecting us. Dr Wu had already told them the girl's story. One official told Dihong that instead of accepting the traditional Chinese label of being "handicapped and useless" she should aim at proving them all wrong. The official told her to return to school and work hard there, concluding with a promise: "I will send someone to see you there some day."

Wu Dihong had told me she was fond of Chinese and English but found mathematics difficult. I went to a bookstore before I left and presented her with a pile of reading and story books, plus a couple of volumes on remedial arithmetic. Later in Beijing, I asked a young friend who taught mathematics in high school to buy and mail Dihong some more books on that subject. I was able to send her more books in English when I arrived in Hong Kong and again when I reached home in San Diego. A good friend who had suffered from polio and whose limbs were of little use recommended that I get the girl a typewriter, so I gave her one on "permanent loan" the next time I visited China. The arrangement was that I might use the typewriter when I was travelling around the country, but she would look after it at other times. In those days typewriters were hard to find in China, except perhaps in a few of the larger and more modern cities. The girl soon learned how to type, striking the keys with the rubber end of a lead pencil that she held between her toes. It was a laborious process, but as she became more practiced she was able to produce a tidy page.

In 1981, during my third trip to the new China, I was again able to bring the case of Wu Dihong to the attention of the authorities. They and the commune in which her family lived were quite considerate to the armless girl. One of the best things that happened to her was a complete change in attitude by her parents. Both of them really tried to help her as much as they were able. The father once asked his factory if they could let him have some spare pipes, bricks, and cement so that he could build a separate bathtub for her in her room. The factory manager gladly sent two workmen on a weekend and donated all the necessary materials, so all the family had to do was to invite the workmen for dinner that night. Acting upon the advice of the orthopaedic surgeon of Tangshan, I advised the father to request a set of artificial arms to be made for her, but this suggestion came to nothing. Unsuccessful attempts were made to devise and fit limbs, primarily for cosmetic reasons, but Wu Dihong's shoulders were not normal.

Academically she tried her level best and reached the tenth grade without having to repeat a class. In more recent times this brave girl, who is now a mature young woman, wrote to tell me that the government had helped her find a job at a clothing factory, where her duties included typing. I did not quite understand the full story and wrote to ask her parents for clarification. It appears that she had not been able to keep up with her academic work, so the municipal Civics

Affairs Bureau persuaded the factory to employ her. Unfortunately for poor Dihong, she had to work on a Chinese typewriter that was vastly more difficult to operate and clumsy than the small portable English typewriter I had given her. I later heard that Dihong was staying in the factory during the week and going home on Sundays. Her salary was understandably quite low, as most salaries are in China, and I know it was hard for her to cope with the job. Yet I felt somehow that her fighting spirit would continue to bring her through. Much later, I was delighted to learn that Dihong had become a teacher of English. She married, had a baby, and still taught at a local school.

Since 1978 when I first met Dihong, who was aged 10 at the time, I had become increasingly concerned about the lack of available prostheses for the handicapped in China. The engineer who had worked on Dihong's case told me that it was almost impossible to devise electronic artificial arms for her. However, he added that perhaps in the outside world where technology was more advanced, the experts might have found some way to accomplish this difficult task. This got me thinking, so I started making enquiries and was eventually referred to the Child Amputee Prosthetic Project at the University of California in Los Angeles, where two American-born Japanese, one a pediatrician and the other an engineer, were training people in this type of work.

Meanwhile I had to visit Britain for six weeks, but as soon as I returned a friend fixed an appointment with the doctor and engineer and also drove me there for an interesting and informative interview that lasted about an hour. The advice given to me was that China should send their engineer, Mr Wu Chi-sang, who already knew how to make electrically controlled artificial limbs, to Los Angeles. He could be accompanied by a therapist who would learn how to train the children in the use of their appliances, together with a translator if need be. This could be considered a short-term measure to solve the problem. The Prosthetic Project would not charge any fees, but the necessary funds for transport, board and lodging, and other expenses would need to be provided by China.

As a long-term measure, it was suggested that the Chinese authorities select some suitable, mature graduate who could pass the selection requirements of the project, including sufficient knowledge of the English language to benefit from the course. He or she would undertake a year's study and then do another year of practical training in the work. Afterwards the qualified person would return to China to

train others. On September 9, 1985, I received a letter from Mr Miao Hung-shi, director of the Research Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Handicapped in China. The authorities had accepted our suggestion to send three people over to Los Angeles for training, but because funds were extremely limited they could only provide for their fares from China to Los Angeles. It was a small beginning but one that led to greater things as the years went by.

As a result of my educational visits to China, I thus inadvertently became involved in that country's efforts to provide for the physically handicapped. It was a worthwhile endeavour, and I was pleased that China was opening up to the outside world and beginning to be more liberal. Ever since the Communist "liberation," China had done excellent work in caring for blind, deaf, and dumb children. Those who were severely handicapped, especially if they had been abandoned by their families, would be given custodial care in a local provincial welfare institution. These varied in quality depending on the ability, ingenuity, and dedication of the staff in charge. If the institution later discovered a family's whereabouts, the authorities would return the child to its home, at least until quite recently.

Fortunately, the system has since been changed, and families can now pay a nominal fee for an institution to care for a severely handicapped child. The amount is set according to the family's means. In addition to having special schools for the blind, deaf, and dumb, a strong national organisation looked after the interests of handicapped persons, with local branches in many of the larger cities. The organisation was so active that it often set up factories manned largely by its own members. From time to time it would arrange for groups to travel abroad to enable them to meet similarly handicapped people elsewhere. They printed a beautifully illustrated booklet about their activities, and many professionals and government officials dealing with their problems were named honorary members of their organisations.

I suppose that I initially became interested in this subject during my first visit to the new China in 1972, when I was shown a number of schools and factories where the handicapped were being taught or employed. Even so, their needs were not always understood by the masses, and to some degree there was a tendency to ignore the existence of these physically defective people. For example, when I tried to discuss the emotional problems faced by the handicapped and described some of the more severe cases I had seen in institutions in England or America,



my guide at the time said emphatically: "No, in the new China there are no such people." Later at Beijing University, Ms Meng Chao-lan, Professor of Psychology, told me that the larger cities such as Beijing, Nanjing, and Shanghai did have their own arrangements for dealing with both the physically and mentally handicapped, though she could not give me details. I did not then realise that during the Cultural Revolution even her Department of Psychology was not allowed to function. She and other psychologists throughout the country had to find work in other fields. The Cultural Revolution had been a time when the intelligentsia were publicly condemned and castigated; many were "disgraced" on the grounds of nothing more than their intellect or educational attainments and sent to labour in the countryside for "re-education." It was a dangerous time to have an education in the new China. The Red Guards, some no more than prepubescent juveniles, were instrumental in closing special schools for the deaf in Beijing and Shanghai. By 1972 things seemed to be getting back to normal, but there was still much that needed to be done.

In 1978 I made Shanghai one of my first stops and visited the Children's Welfare Institute. I was so impressed that I offered to try to build some liaison for them with similar organisations in Hong Kong, which had been developing quite well for about thirty years. Soon after that, when I was in Beijing, Honorary Chairman Soong Ching Ling (Madame Sun Yat-sen) enthusiastically encouraged me when I told her I hoped to do something for the handicapped in China. In accordance with her advice, the widow of Marshal Zhu De—Madame Kang Ke-qing, who succeeded Madame Sun in the work for women and children—was also helpful whenever I or others asked for her assistance. And when I brought a group of international people to visit her, Madame Kang received us at the Great Hall of the People. I have a photograph of that meeting that I really treasure.

When I later heard that Madame Soong was ill, I felt we must not bother her. I thus took her advice and wrote to Madame Kang to tell her that it was essential to have a meeting with representatives of the three major government departments concerned, as well as with other interested parties. She passed the letter to Ms Zhang Shu-yi, secretary-general of both the Women's Federation and the Protect the Children Committee, who organised a meeting of twenty-odd key personnel. I passed a paper around and asked them to record their names, department or organisation, and position or job function. I wanted to

keep that information for future reference. Shortly after that, I was at Beijing University where my good friend Prof Meng Chao-lan had arranged for a small group of professionals to meet me; they were truly interested and knowledgeable.

During visits in 1981, 1982, and 1984, I was given many opportunities to speak about special education to both large and small groups and officials in some of the larger cities in China. I believe those people were encouraged to have international professionals with similar interests visiting them. The United Nations, through its various subsidiaries, was also helpful. Experts were sent to China, and Chinese representatives were invited to visit various institutions in the United States and elsewhere. The International Association for the Handicapped, with its Chinese president, Dr Harry Fang of Hong Kong, was also a useful body with which to have contact. On one occasion the Chinese National Association for Handicapped Persons, with the son of Mr Deng Xiaoping as its president, took a large number of donated Chinese paintings to Hong Kong for a sale that proved a great success. Young Mr Deng was himself handicapped, having been tortured and thrown from an upper-storey window by Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution.

So keen was interest in the subject that in 1982 China sent a student who had attended Prof Piao's lectures in Beijing to stay in California for three years. While there, the student obtained her Master's degree and spent another full year to participate in various practical activities related to teaching and caring for the handicapped. She returned to help Prof Piao run his courses at Beijing University. In Nanjing and more than half a dozen other cities, special training colleges were established specifically to train teachers for special schools. In many of the larger cities, classes or schools were set up specifically for retarded children. Some of the institutions with hospitalised physically handicapped children began running classes for their charges. Orthopaedic departments of nearby hospitals also began helping individual children wherever time and facilities permitted. Unfortunately, I do not think much was done for those with emotional problems. It was important when dealing with China not to be too critical if their efforts did not meet the standards set by other more developed or affluent countries. Fortunately, in the revisions to China's constitution in 1986 both special education and general education were given considerable attention. The country is now making an all-out effort to improve attitudes toward and the status of the handicapped.

At the end of my second trip, when I was in Hong Kong I was able to ask my nephew Eric Ho, who was then in charge of the Department for Social Services, to call a small meeting of representatives of the Medical, Education, and Social Welfare Departments. I told them what I had seen and heard in China and said that I hoped they would be willing to cooperate with China in matters of special education and welfare. They welcomed the idea, so we gathered a large pile of literature from the various organisations and institutions engaged in that work. I wrote a letter and sent copies of it to twelve people in China whom I felt might be interested in the matter. These contacts included Madame Sun and others directly or indirectly connected with the work. I mailed the letters, saying that some literature would follow and identifying Eric as the contact person, since I myself was about to leave Hong Kong for America. I was not quite sure what to do with the printed matter, but I felt it might be best to have it all sent to an address in Guangzhou for redistribution. This must have been early in 1979. One day I was in the office of Mr Henry Tsoi, manager of the China Travel Service in Hong Kong, and I mentioned this dilemma to him. He offered to have the literature delivered for me, so I had all the booklets and pamphlets sent to his office. Unfortunately only one or two people in Guangzhou remembers ever seeing anything of the sort. In any case, the project obviously misfired. Nobody wrote back to Eric, so on my third trip, in the spring of 1981, I felt I had to start all over again.

In August 1987 I wrote to an officer of the National Committee of the United States-China Peoples' Friendship Association (USCPFA) in Washington, DC, in an attempt to put together a package that would enable social workers and teachers to visit China with the intention of being of benefit to the handicapped community. Unfortunately, the USCPFA officer resigned soon after, so we decided to deal with the San Francisco branch instead. Together with Dr Gwen Cooper, my colleague from San Diego, I sent a detailed letter that was to become the first step in a project that took up at least three-quarters of my available time for two years. I had been a member of the San Diego chapter of USCPFA for more than ten years and had already contacted Estelle Colvin, our president, about this proposed tour. However, I had not yet finalised the itinerary for Estelle to put out the publicity for us.

By that time I had already returned to Hong Kong about ten times and revisited China five times since November 1972 for a total of

fourteen months. In Hong Kong I kept in touch with Miss Elizabeth Rowe, a former colleague who had developed the territory's special schools. One day she remarked that she too had often been to China as a member of various tours, but she had never seen any special schools while there. I told her I would try to organise a tour to see the work that had been developing steadily all over China during the past few years. The year before I had asked the China Travel Service in Hong Kong to estimate the proposed tour cost and had discussed it with various friends in the United States, China, Britain, and Hong Kong. A good professional and personal friend, Dr Gwen Cooper, who was senior woman counsellor at San Diego State University, agreed to be co-organisier with me. Together we worked out some preliminary publicity. In March I wrote in Chinese to several personal and influential friends in China, asking them for suggestions and possible sponsors for our project. In April and early May I was in Britain for just over three weeks and while there gave an illustrated lecture about China at the Institute of Education. Unfortunately, due to the Easter vacation, not many people other than my personal friends attended, but I was able to send our publicity material to three periodicals, two for teachers and one for social workers.

Upon my return to San Diego, I wrote again in May 1987 to Ms Zhang Shu-yi. Also, I started looking around for a travel service to handle all the details. There were a number to choose from. We previously had dealings with the China International Travel Service, which offered us considerable reductions, but we were interested in the China Women's Travel Service (CWTS). It seemed to be a good prospect if we could be certain of its reliability. Finally I consulted a fellow member of the San Diego USCPFA, and she strongly advised me to contact the CWTS and find out exactly what they could provide us. My letter to them was detailed and asked questions such as whether or not their staff could read Chinese and speak Mandarin. This would be necessary if they should wish to contact China to confirm bookings and travel arrangements.

I asked that the agency try to keep the costs down as far as possible, otherwise many of the teachers and social workers would not be able to afford to join us. Some of the arrangements had to fit in with other things we had organised. Gwen, for example, had to attend a psychology conference after our tour. I was going to remain in Hong Kong staying with relatives for perhaps another three weeks, and

I therefore needed to fix a different date for the return journey to California. Some of the other tour members had similar travel commitments after the China visit. We asked for our accommodation in China to be air-conditioned everywhere except Tangshan, where we knew the guest houses were not equipped with such an amenity.

By August of that year we had managed to draw up an itinerary, though Gwen and I were still the only confirmed participants of the tour, which was still ten months away. Our publicity material included a map of China showing the eight cities to be visited, but we felt that we were running out of time to finalise all the arrangements. I had already tried to solicit the aid of the Great Britain-China Centre, but they declined to help because they had their own tours to attend to. My two friends and former colleagues in Hong Kong—Ms M.E.M. Benham, a medical social worker, and Ms E. Rowe, senior education officer in charge of special education—were willing to help but as they did not live in London I felt they would have difficulty coordinating the UK end of our travel. In Hong Kong I relied mainly on the Mental Health Association and some of its officers to undertake the work. My vague hope was to put together a party comprising about sixteen from America, ten or so from Britain, and up to fifteen from Hong Kong. I originally estimated the minimum number to be sixteen and the maximum 35, but finally I had to be content with ten participants. Nevertheless, this smaller number still made up a lively party and, of course, was much easier to organise.

Eventually the summer of 1988 arrived and the special education tour, which was reasonably well subscribed, entered China. For many it was their first visit, of course, and I remember how excited they were when we got to Beijing. For the first-timers there was so much sightseeing to do, but my return to the city was tinged with sadness because I spent the first day visiting an old friend, Mr Zhao Jun-mai, who was then terminally ill; he passed away soon after we left Beijing. He told me in 1984 and repeatedly in his letters that he had been to secondary school with my husband H.H. in Japan and had attended the same class and shared the same dormitory bedroom; a cousin of ours was also with them. He also told me he had known my "soldier brother," General Ho Shai-lai, quite well, having been asked by the head of the Chinese Salt Administration to befriend Shai-lai when they both served in that office in 1938. In 1984, in his capacity as vice-president of the Western Returned Students' Association in Beijing, he had arranged for

that organisation to invite me to lecture on special education and welfare to their members, workers in those specialities, and others. A couple of hundred persons attended, and many signed their names and affiliations on some lists handed to me.

I was particularly eager to take our group to Tangshan, where they were all greatly impressed by the rapid redevelopment in the decade since the great earthquake. In place of the disaster area, we found a well-planned, modern industrial town rebuilt entirely from scratch with good housing for all the workers. I made enquiries and was told that the Mining Administration of Tangshan looked after its own handicapped children and adults, assigning them to suitable classes, work, or care as needed. The administration also provided good primary and secondary schools for the children of its workers in addition to what the city had arranged. As some of the community leaders there already knew me from my former position as an English secretary in the Kailan Mining Administration, and because I had secured special permission to visit Tangshan in 1981 and 1982, they greeted me as an old friend and gave me a special dinner.

I took the opportunity to suggest that industrial organisations such as the Mining Administration, which had the funds available and could spend them as they thought best, might some day find it possible to attract back to China some of the scholars who had gone abroad and were reluctant to return. Some reasons for their reluctance were the early compulsory retirement age of 55 and the lack of equipment, facilities, and resources to enable these scholars to make the best possible use of their advanced training for the good of the country. I had been concerned about this problem ever since the 1970s, when it was announced that China planned to send many selected scholars abroad every year for further training. During my lifetime, I had seen and heard so much about the "brain drain" from many countries, and I feared it would happen also to China. This would be a great pity since China so badly needs well-trained people to help educate the young for the general development of their country.

Despite my heavy tour schedule, I was able to make arrangements to see many of my husband's close relatives in China. On that same first day in Beijing, while the others were sightseeing, I paid a special visit to my cousin-in-law Mrs Hosien Tseng, whom I call a sister-in-law because our husbands were first cousins but were called "brothers" in China. She had been especially kind to me when I first

returned to Beijing as a new widow with a child. By 1988 she was quite frail and seldom ventured out except to see her doctor or to be hospitalised. She was glad to see me, especially when I was able to fit in a second visit just before we left Beijing. My real sister-in-law Mary, the widow of my husband's brother Dick with whom I had lived in Mukden for half a year, was a little stronger. She, her daughter Maizie, her son-in-law, and her granddaughter all came to have dinner with me one evening. Besides that visit, Maizie managed to drop by on many other occasions in the evenings.

In addition to the normal tour schedule, our group did a little friendly flag-waving and put on a large tea party on US Independence Day, the 4th of July, which the China Women's Travel Service and I personally hosted. For this party, we invited some prominent officials and many professional people to a large reception room in our hotel. I also invited as many of my relatives and friends who cared to come to see us. I had to say something to welcome everyone, so I told them a little more about our tour. There was plenty of food, many photos were taken, and almost all the guests signed my visitors' book.

I was delighted to have the honor of entertaining so many of my Chinese friends under one roof, because they had all been such loyal supporters over the years. Among the leading ladies in Beijing who attended were Prof Lei Jie-chong, formerly a lecturer at Beijing University; the deputy mayor of Beijing; and a senior member of the People's Political Consultative Committee. Another member of this important organisation was Madame Wang Guang-mei, widow of former Chinese President Liu Shiao-chi, who was especially friendly towards me. Soon after I went to live in San Diego, I attended a public lecture about China and heard that this extremely well-educated lady was fluent in French and Russian as well as English. At our first meeting, we had a real heart-to-heart talk; I later met her for the second time in 1984 and enjoyed sitting next to her at a round table in one of the provincial reception rooms of the Great Hall of the People at the lunch party given for me by the deputy head of the United Front. Another capable and knowledgeable stalwart was Ms Zhang Shu-yi, former general secretary of both the Women's Federation and the national committee of the Protect the Children Association. We had previously become good friends and she kindly escorted me around during this visit.

Another guest, Prof Meng Chiao-lan, was the lady who had first

given me some positive answers to my enquiries about special education in January 1973. Dr Piao, a professor of special education at the Beijing Normal University, managed to be there even though he was busy helping organise an international conference on special education when our tour arrived. He arranged for me to be at the opening session of the conference, and I was given a seat on the platform so that I could see and hear better. I was fortunate to be seated between the two experts from Great Britain, both of whom had papers to present. One exchanged letters with me after the conference was over and commented that he was quite disappointed that everything was done only in English without Chinese translations, and I fully agreed with him.

The morning after the tea party we flew off to Xian where our tour indulged in Chinese history among the impressive excavations. These included not only the now famous terracotta warriors and the horses of the First Emperor, but also the 6,000-year-old culture at Banpo, which I had first seen in 1972 before the soldiers and horses had even been found. However, apart from sightseeing, I was interested in a private institution run by women for post-secondary professional and vocational training of young ladies.

When we got to Shanghai, one of the first things we did was to pay our respects at the tomb of Madame Sun Yat-sen. She had undoubtedly been one of China's outstanding women of the century and was respected worldwide. I feel proud and honoured to have known her personally. I was invited to the ceremonies in Beijing when she was lying in state and to the memorial service just before she was taken away for cremation. There was genuine grief and a sense of loss throughout the country when she passed away. She was indeed loved in China, especially by women and children.

In Shanghai I visited the Children's Welfare Institute, which I had seen at least three times previously. During my first two visits it was under the first director, Ms Yang Jie-zhung, whom I regarded as one of the outstanding pioneers in training special welfare personnel in China. She was one of the three officials who came to my hotel at the end of my week's stay, after an official from the Bureau of Education told me repeatedly that there were no special schools other than those for the blind and deaf. Ms Yang assured me that her Civic Affairs Bureau (equivalent to social welfare bureaus in other countries) did have an institution with several hundred severely handicapped children, both mentally and physically, and she showed me many



photographs.

Shanghai held a particular significance for me because I had many relatives there on my late husband's side. Many of H.H.'s relations were engaged in business, sometimes associated with foreign firms. For instance, his "Cousin-Uncle" Mr C.S. Shen, who was present at our wedding, had been manager of the British American Tobacco Co (BAT), which was taken over by the Chinese government and renamed the Shanghai Tobacco Co. Mr Shen was an important business magnate and also an exceedingly sociable person, so his home was a mecca for the many relatives and friends who passed through Shanghai. He had a huge dining table that could comfortably seat about fifteen people, but when Junie and I passed through Shanghai on our way from Tangshan home to Hong Kong in 1946 after the Pacific War, there were so many guests present that twenty or so had to stand around the table. I had been told by H.H. that in the old days, when my brother-in-law went to Shanghai and wanted to see some of his other relatives there, all he had to do was ask them to meet him at the home of Uncle C.S. Shen, where they would be appropriately looked after.

Uncle and Auntie Shen only had one daughter, Shen Yen, who had attended a private school in Cambridge, England, for part of her education and who inherited many of her father's traits, especially his sociability. She had married a BAT engineer, Mr H.H. Chen, and so had to stay on in Shanghai even after her parents had moved to Hong Kong. However, her home remained the social hub for her relatives and probably also for her friends. During my first two trips to the new China, I stayed at the Overseas Chinese Hotel when I was in Shanghai, but Yen kept inviting me to stay at her home instead. Finally, I accepted her gracious offer and became her guest on later trips. Her husband was an excellent cook, so there was always plenty of good food around, and many relatives and friends dropped in to share it with us. During our trip in 1988, Yen and her husband happened to be in America visiting their many relatives and friends, so I did not see them. Unfortunately, I had forgotten to take my address book to China and could not locate some of my relatives in Shanghai. However, while riding in a taxi I told the driver that one of my nieces, Ms Liu Guang-ning, was a famous radio announcer. When the taxi driver heard that name, he suggested that I contact her radio station, which I did. They gave me her home telephone number. I reached her husband, who told me Guong-ning was in Hong Kong visiting some other relatives, but he managed to round

up his mother-in-law, a cousin, and another couple, who all came to a dinner I ordered for them.

Nanjing was important to our tour group because it was where the first Teacher's University for Special Education was established. Although the institution was having its summer vacation when we arrived, several key personnel returned to show us around, and we exchanged professional ideas with them. We had originally intended to give two full days to Hangzhou, but we experienced the one failure in our travel arrangements when the flight we should have taken out of Nanjing failed to materialise. We were stranded at the Nanjing airport for several hours, and consequently we arrived late that afternoon. My good friend Cornelia, widow of the late Dr Yue who was superintendent of the local teaching hospital until his final illness, treated me like a sister and waited for me in my hotel for hours while I was stuck at the Nanjing airport. By the time I arrived, there was only time for us to have a short chat, then she insisted on taking the last bus home instead of allowing me to send her home in a taxi. I was completely exhausted, so I let her do what she thought best.

Members of our group were able to view the exquisite scenery and some of the historical and cultural places in Hangzhou, while I only had enough energy to stay in the hotel most of the day to chat with the many personal friends and a few local officials who kindly came a long way to see me. These included Cornelia's son-in-law and grandson, in whom I had taken a special interest since 1981. He came to see me after working all day at a printing factory. In the late afternoon I took a short walk to have another look at the famous fish of bright colours. I know Hangzhou fairly well, having lived there for weeks on end during several previous trips; in fact, I had actually visited Hangzhou for the first time with Miss W.S. Siu in 1926.

Our itinerary was fairly exhausting, and after Hangzhou we crossed the country from east to west to the province of Guilin, where we stayed for two days of sightseeing before moving on to Guangzhou. Among my friends in Guangzhou, Ms Hsu Shun-ying was running an excellent new home that nourished the aged and catered especially to those who were cultured and well educated. She had worked on this project for years, applying to the government to provide the land, some of the necessary funds, and a loan to cover the remainder. This was the first time I was able to visit the venture. When we arrived, the residents were participating in a form of folk dancing, which was not quite the

same as western ballroom dancing though the music was somewhat similar. They danced in pairs without holding on to each other. Many of these residents had been abroad for part of their education, so western practices were familiar to them. This home gave our group a sumptuous dinner, that actually made me feel quite uncomfortable, mainly because I did not want to be such an expense for them and also because I could partake of only very little food.

On the previous evening, we had been given another banquet by the Chinese Political Consultative Committee and the Women's Federation, with the vice-presidents of both these organisations playing host. We had two tables and excellent food was served. Some of my friends were also members of these groups, and it was good to have an opportunity to see them, though here again I felt uncomfortable about the cost incurred by our hosts. We also visited the Children's Welfare Institute, which I had seen some years before when it was a dilapidated institution. This time the whole place had been modernised and enlarged, with a competent staff, good equipment, and plenty of activities for the children, instead of having each child merely sitting on a chair or lying in a cot. I asked about a crippled child whom I had previously referred to an excellent orthopaedic surgeon, Dr Tommy Chow at Jinan University outside Guangzhou. I was delighted when told that Dr Chow had not only dealt with the case himself, but had succeeded in interesting the orthopaedic departments of six hospitals to each undertake two cases. All except one of those twelve cases had proved successful.

I had not seen my faithful old amah, Hing Jie, for several years and thought it would be a good idea to bring her to Guangzhou to stay with me for a few days. I arranged for her niece in Hong Kong to take a trip to their village to escort Hing Jie to the provincial capital. She was naturally happy to see me again and had sorted out her old photographs. She gave me those that had Junie or myself in them, including the one with my father holding Junie's hand and mine, taken on the roof of the annex at Idlewild.

We finally arrived back in Hong Kong where my eldest sister, Lady Victoria Lo, lived in an apartment right opposite my mother's Buddhist temple, the Tung Lin Kok Yuen. Her temple compares quite favourably with the Jade Buddha Temple in Shanghai, in which some of our tour members had been interested. Therefore, after we reached the territory, I invited those who had not yet seen my mother's temple to visit

it. Afterwards the tour members came across the street with me to visit Lady Lo, who impressed them with her youthful skin and the way she coped with her total blindness. That evening the tour members enjoyed dinner at the Floating Restaurant in Aberdeen, but I was too tired to join them. I had come to the end of another of life's chapters. I enjoyed having a more "relaxed" evening with my sister.

## Epilogue

**A**s we entered the 1990s, I began to feel the weight of my years and realised that I had to slow down. I was becoming quite frail. This did not stop me from travelling, but I could no longer take such an active role in professional matters. Time seemed to have passed so quickly since my childhood days at Idlewild and our old Peak houses, Nos 49 and 50. Yet so much had happened since then, and the world had changed beyond belief. Many of my family members had passed on, giving way to a new generation—and some, like myself, had moved to other homes far from Hong Kong.

The deaths of Mamma in 1938, Lady Margaret in 1944, and Father in 1956 had each signalled phases that seemed to be the closing of an era. We had witnessed colonial Hong Kong being subjugated and occupied by the Japanese; we had moved to northern China as virtual "refugees" until it was all over; we had been overjoyed when the colony was finally liberated at the close of World War II; and then, with growing wonderment, we had seen Hong Kong emerge as a modern city and powerhouse of trade, commerce, and industry. Family remained important, of course, but now it was no longer possible to invite everyone to Father's house for a get-together. Indeed, it was often necessary to travel the globe to keep in personal touch with everyone near and dear to us.

By the 1970s, when my sister Vic was in her 70s, she travelled around the world every two or three years to visit various members of her family and friends, journeying all by herself because her husband M.K. had died years before of a sudden heart attack. Altogether, Vic and M.K. had six children. The two elder ones had died young, much to

their parent's sorrow, but fortunately they also had three daughters and a son who grew to adulthood. Usually Vic would start with a month-long visit to her eldest daughter, Phoebe, in California. One year she even spent a few days with me in San Diego. There was not much I could do to entertain her beyond a little sightseeing. I was then living in Loring Street, and one day I walked her out to have a look at the Pacific Ocean. From my apartment we could go to the water and return in about half an hour. After having seen my simple accommodation, we agreed that it would be easier for both of us if I invited myself up to spend a few days with her at Phoebe's beautiful house in Claremont, with its large garden. I always enjoyed going there, as it was complete with rose bushes, other flowers and plants, a delightful swimming pool, and several huge St Bernard dogs.

Phoebe and her husband, Dr Howard Brown, were breeders of these prize-winning animals, and she fussed like a mother over all of them. Once she had some thirty puppies in three litters, each of which had to be bottle-fed. However, she managed to do all this plus her job as a fourth grade teacher at the local elementary school. Howard lectured at a nearby college, but he later retired from that job and the couple moved to Vista, a little closer to us, where they ran an orchard with avocado and other fruit trees and, of course, their beloved St Bernards. I had specially invited Phoebe to be a bridesmaid at my wedding, so we are very close to each other. When she had completed her visit to Phoebe, Vic would go via San Francisco to either New York or Toronto and then to London, first staying at the famous Claridges Hotel for a couple of days. This would give her time to do some shopping at Harrods and mail out handwritten invitations to her friends, many of them prominent leaders who had retired in Britain from Hong Kong. Then she would run off to visit Grace, Florence, and some friends, each for a few days, at the end of which she would return to Claridges to host a large party for her guests. It was an enjoyable reunion of "old timers" from Hong Kong. Vic would then hold another lunch party for relatives and close friends and their children, which was usually followed by her taking them all out to a show.

After I moved to San Diego, I tried to visit Vic in Hong Kong every couple of years, and she would delight in telling me about those trips abroad. When she was at home in the colony, she maintained an active and organised lifestyle according to proper Chinese custom. Almost invariably on Saturday afternoons she would ask her chauffeur to drive

her to visit relatives or friends who were ill in the hospital or at home, taking along small gifts of fruit. When I happened to be visiting her, she would take me along with her. Vic symbolised some of the good, humane aspects of traditional Chinese culture. Among other things, she always tried to reply to any letter she received, within at most about three weeks, unless she was away from Hong Kong. Even then, as soon as she returned home she would attend to all her accumulated correspondence. Even the newspapers had to be saved for her to look through. She told me she read all the leading articles and practically all the headlines, especially to keep up with current issues. She also scanned the obituary columns. When she spotted the demise of someone we were friendly with, she would occasionally cut out the notice and send it to me or Phoebe. She was a Buddhist and prayed daily, often many times, reading from her prayer-book or reciting other prayers by heart. Every morning, accompanied by one or two attendants, she would go across the street to pray at the Tung Lin Kok Yuen Temple that Mamma had built and of which she was a trustee.

Her other two daughters, Vera and Rita, lived in Hong Kong. Both of them visited her practically every day, especially when Vic lost her sight. Vera married Y.K. Hui, an engineer trained in the United Kingdom, and they had four sons, two of them twins. The other daughter became Dr Rita Lo and married Dr Rudy Khoo, a radiologist from Indonesia. Both had trained at The University of Hong Kong and in the United Kingdom, and they had three daughters. Of course, as I write this the children are all grown up. Rita's three girls are happily married, some with children, and Vera's older boys are also married.

In odd moments my thoughts turn to Daisy, who was born a half-day before the beginning of this century and three months before the birth of our half-sister Mary, whose mother, Ah Jieh, died when Mary was about nine. Both Daisy and Mary are now dead; Mary was the first of our eight sisters to pass on in 1970, and Daisy died in December 1975. For all their wisdom in other matters, our parents had never really known how best to help poor Daisy overcome her handicap, as she was mentally retarded. In those days, during the first and second decades of the century, few people even in the western world knew much about appropriate education and training for retarded or slow-learning children, hence none could advise our parents on how to help Daisy. Even if there had been some suitable school abroad, my parents would have felt it unthinkable to send her all alone to a foreign

land for special training.

Even in the west in those days, most families regarded it as a terrible disgrace to have a retarded child; we heard stories of such children being kept in cellars or attics hidden from public view. In our large family, however, Daisy took part in everything that the rest of us were engaged in. When Eva, Robbie, and I went to school, Mamma sent Daisy along with us as a boarder for two years in an attempt to give her special help. By the time it was evident that the schooling was not really working, Daisy was almost 16 years old. The headmistress came to explain the true situation to Mamma. The real fact was that Daisy was just unfortunate to have been born several decades too early - or perhaps that Hong Kong was too late in starting to make provisions for the special education of mentally retarded people.

My affection and sympathy for Daisy partly explains why later I fought so hard for special education to be introduced not only in Hong Kong, but also in the People's Republic of China. I understood and had experienced firsthand how the problem had affected Daisy, our parents, and some of us siblings. Daisy eventually ended up in an institution. Apart from losing her liberty and having to live with some other mentally ill patients (which did not seem to bother her too much), she seemed to adjust quite well to her circumstances and even seemed to lead quite a pleasant life. She designed her own embroidery, had her supply of cigarettes, and enjoyed an occasional game of mah-jong. The sisters, doctors, amahs, and even the janitors were all quite kind to her, and during my visits I usually found her sitting by herself doing her embroidery or enjoying a game of dominoes with other patients or staff if they were free. Daisy always greeted me with a happy smile.

Daisy was almost 76 when she passed away peacefully at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Kowloon in December 1975. I had made a special trip home to Hong Kong because it was Mamma's Centenary. When Vic met my plane on the evening of my arrival, she told me that Daisy was ill in the hospital, and we went over to visit her the very next afternoon. She was being looked after day and night by private nurses, besides being attended to by the regular hospital staff who catered fully to her needs. Hesta, who had made all the arrangements for Daisy's care, her Catholic sister-in-law, Mother Victoria Au-yang, and Vic and I visited her whenever we could. She chatted cheerfully with her special nurses and often wrote in Chinese or English to supplement what she was telling them verbally. Among the notes that the staff returned to us after



she passed away, I noticed that she had written Robbie's name and title in Chinese, General Ho Shai-lai. Evidently she had been very fond of him and proud of being his elder sister.

Towards the end, Robbie happened to be away from Hong Kong. Vic and I felt that Daisy was probably waiting to see him before she died. Finally, he did return and of course immediately went to visit her. A couple of nights later the hospital rang him up to tell him that Daisy was slipping away quickly. He immediately went to the hospital and was able to be there with her when she died. Because Daisy had become a Catholic, we had a Roman Catholic service at the funeral parlour officiated by a priest, and also prayers at the graveside in a new section of Chiu Yuen Cemetery conducted by Daisy's sister-in-law, Mother Victoria, a Catholic nun. Daisy was laid to rest quite near the graves of Henry, M.K., Gwen, and Wilbur —the latter two being Vic's eldest daughter and son. Mamma, our grandparents, and many other relatives and friends are also buried in that cemetery.

My brother Eddie, who lost both his lower legs during the war, eventually went to the United States to have proper artificial limbs made and fitted; the manufacturers also showed him how to adjust them whenever they began to feel uncomfortable. When he was wearing his artificial limbs, people found it hard to believe that both his legs had been amputated. He seemed to be able to do almost anything that an ordinary person could do. He could drive his own car, stand, walk around, dance, and lead a normal business and social life. He eventually came home and lived in the room next to ours in Idlewild's basement. He was quite generous to Junie and me. When she went to Girton College, Cambridge University, for her higher education, Eddie gave us a donation that I was grateful to receive. When I went away to attend the annual meetings of the World Federation for Mental Health, Eddie offered to help Junie anytime she might be in need. I did not take him up on these offers, but we both appreciated it. When I travelled for my UNESCO fellowship, he thoughtfully presented me with a case for my passport, which I still keep in his memory.

On one occasion while I was living in Hong Kong, Eddie's thoughtfulness literally gave me a headache. I used to go to work by bus, and one morning he went out of his way to offer me a lift, which I accepted. He let me off near the Supreme Court building. At the time, I was wearing a new pair of spectacles with bifocal lenses. I misjudged the curb, slipped, and fell. When I got up, my nose was bleeding, so the

building attendants called an ambulance, which took me to Queen Mary Hospital. I telephoned my office to say I could not go to work, and the hospital, with the help of an X-ray, found that I had fractured my nasal bone. I was hospitalised for a couple of weeks while my nose and face went through all the colours of the rainbow. I told Eddie that my stay in hospital had given me a much needed rest from the office.

About fifteen months after Father passed away, in the summer of 1957, Eddie was not feeling well; he had a pain that went down his left arm. His good friend Dr Thomas tried to persuade him to go into the hospital for a rest and a thorough check-up, but Eddie's reply was that he was too busy. He was evidently doing quite well in business and was happy that he had been re-elected to the board of directors of the Hang Sang Bank. That evening, Hang Seng held a big celebration banquet, and Eddie had a very happy time as some of his old college friends were sitting at the same table. One of them came to our house early the following day and told me how they had spent the evening reminiscing. When the dinner was over, Eddie's secretary had driven him home.

Because of his handicap, whenever Eddie returned after an evening out, the manservants of our house would carry him up the flight of about twenty steps from street level to his room. He had an amah who normally went upstairs to sleep, but that night she stayed down in his room to look after him. As he did not seem to be too comfortable, she offered to call a doctor or his secretary, but he did not want to bother anybody and told her to wait until morning. He dozed off but woke again in the middle of the night complaining that the room was cold. One of our manservants, Ah Hop, doubled as a night watchman and used to sleep on a couch in the corridor outside. Eddie called for him to come and close the bedroom ventilators. He then rested some more, but according to the amah—who was with him all the time—after a short while he suddenly kicked a few times and seemed to be having a spasm. She called Ah Hop to fetch me from my room next door. I am a light sleeper and immediately rushed to his bedside, but it seemed that he was already dead, so I immediately rang Eva upstairs. She had just come home from a case and had changed into her pyjamas but had not yet gone to bed, so she came down immediately. There was nothing either of us could do. Eddie was, indeed, dead.

I telephoned Eddie's friend Dr Thomas, who explained that he could not come at that time. Then I rang Dr Ashton at the Nethersole Hospital next door. He too could not come, but he calmly explained to

me that it seemed nothing could be done for Eddie since he had already passed away. He said that if Eddie had been a patient already in hospital, they might have tried putting him in an oxygen tent, but that was impossible in this case. My brother had evidently had a massive heart attack, and nothing could be done for him. He was just over 55 years old. Funeral arrangements were begun and Eddie's two sons, Eric and Joe, came home together with Joe's first wife. His two daughters, Toni and Mary, were boarders at a nearby school and they, too, returned home. Friends and relatives kept streaming in all day, and it was a real shock to all of them, as it was to the entire family. A devout Catholic, he was buried about a week later in the Roman Catholic Cemetery in Happy Valley.

In 1990 Eddie's widow Mordia and some of their children and grandchildren lived in Hong Kong, while others had their homes in the United States. From time to time they would travel between the two places to maintain family connections. Vic had been exceedingly kind to Mordia when Mamma was still alive, so Mordia would regularly go round to visit Vic. I met her there many times and often went to her comfortable home in Mid-Levels for lunch. Eddie's sons, Eric and Joe, and the younger daughter Mary all married Americans. Being Roman Catholic, they all had large families. As they inherited a good share of Father's wealth and property in Hong Kong, most of them stayed in the territory to look after their inheritance. With good management, they have been able to build successfully on it. Eric's wife Pat, who was close to me and whom I liked very much, bore her husband eight children. I have not seen her for years, except once when she was invited by the Ho Tung Technical School for Girls to distribute prizes at the awards ceremony I always attend. I understand that Joe sold a good deal of the property he inherited and stays in America for part of each year. Many moons ago, when he and his first wife Mary were staying at Idlewild and I was living within walking distance at the YWCA, I saw them a number of times. Joe and his second wife, Anne, also invited me for dinner at their new home. It intrigued me how they had been able to preserve some of the fittings and other objects from Idlewild and had incorporated them into their new home. At the front entrance hung the pair of mahogany doors, with two beautiful paintings of Scottish scenery on glass, which I described earlier. The inside of the house was decorated with various Idlewild relics, such as the sliding doors with mirrors on both sides that used to sit between the dining and sitting rooms in the old house. Also

there were Father's marble wash-stand and Mamma's mantelpiece. As Eddie's children are Catholic, my youngest brother Robbie was able to move the ancestral tablets and other shrines from Idlewild to his home for proper care.

Actually, I do not know too much about my nephews and nieces in this branch of the family, because they are as busy as I am. As a result, I see little of them during my periodic visits to Hong Kong. Eddie spelt his surname as one word, not as Ho Tung as we had been taught, so his branch of the family has followed his example. Some of them had buildings erected on their share of the property they inherited. These bear the name Hotung, so that they can be easily identified. Eddie's elder daughter, Toni, became a Roman Catholic nun and rendered much dedicated service in mission schools in San Francisco and Macau. Some years ago, during one of my brief visits to San Francisco, she came round to see me a couple of times. I went to her convent once when I was in Macau, but she happened to be away that day. From her colleagues I got the impression that she was highly regarded. She is now no longer a nun, but continues to participate in educational work and in helping to raise funds for some school for poor children run by her mission. Recently, I happened to ring up her mother in Hong Kong and had a short chat with Toni on the telephone.

After World War II Eva returned to Hong Kong and set up office as a gynaecological surgeon and obstetrician, where she ran a successful practice for many years. As most babies arrive during the night or early morning hours, it kept her "on call" 24 hours a day. One way she would relax was to go to the cinema, but she always arranged for her amah to monitor her home telephone and relay important telephone messages, especially "call-outs," to the box office. The cinema ushers, whom Eva used to tip, kept the details of her row and seat number written on a piece of paper so she was easy to find. Eva was well known at the Hong Kong Hospital and Sanatorium in Happy Valley, to which she sent many of her patients. However, the work must have been a heavy strain, for her health began to suffer. First she rested in Hong Kong for a while, then finally she told me that she was going to move to the United States. She went to live in New York, trained as a medical statistician, and worked in a doctor's office for many years. Eventually she gave that up and, by dabbling successfully in the stock market, managed to live in a comfortable apartment in New York City, with a little garden in the building and good neighbours and friends close by. Grace visited her

several times, and Robbie went to celebrate her 80th birthday with her. I, too, visited her once and was asked to come again.

In 1965, when Mamma would have been 90 years old, we decided that we should celebrate her birthday posthumously, in accordance with accepted Chinese custom. As she had been the founder and prime mover for the Tung Lin Kok Yuen Temple, the board of this organisation decided that they would be the logical sponsors of this celebration. I decided that as her own book about her travels to the sacred Buddhist mountains would not provide its readers with an appreciation of her character and personality, it was up to us as her children to write such an account and make it available to interested people. I therefore undertook the first draft and then asked Shai-lai (Robbie) to add his recollections and comments on how Mamma had encouraged and helped him achieve his ambition to gain entry into the Chinese military. The little booklet, in excellent Chinese, was published under his name.

Robbie, the youngest of our four brothers, decided to use his Chinese name, Ho Shai-lai, when he entered the Chinese Army. In order to facilitate his entry, he first had to undergo intensive training. In 1924 my parents had hoped that he would be accepted by a well-known Chinese military academy, and Mamma had personally escorted him there. However, for some reason at that time it happened to be closed. Consequently, my parents instead sent him to England for training at Woolwich Military Academy, but first he had to undertake some study from private tutors for his entrance exams. A couple of years later, when we first went to England in 1927, he would occasionally come and spend a weekend with Mamma, Eva, and me. Robbie subsequently had further training at Fontainebleau in France before returning to China to serve a couple of years; he then undertook an officer's training course at Fort Leavenworth in the United States.

A few years ago, in 1988, there was an article about our family in a Hong Kong Chinese magazine that mentioned Shai-lai's military career. It said that he had told them that the largest group of soldiers he ever commanded was 70,000, which was undoubtedly true. Shai-lai rose to the rank of full general and was highly respected by the Chinese government of Taipei. Since his retirement, he has enjoyed travelling, sometimes on an ocean liner instead of flying, and usually visits Taiwan, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, and the United States from time to time. In Hong Kong, besides looking after a share of the family property

given to him and for which he was made a trustee on behalf of his son and daughter, Robbie has done a good job serving for many years as chairman of the board of trustees of the Tung Lin Kok Yuen Temple and the Po Kok Schools, on which I also serve. It was Robbie who suggested that the Po Kok Middle School (a secondary school) should train its students in using computers. This gave me the incentive and determination to become computer literate, just as I was turning 80 years of age. I am so glad I did and have been tapping away at the keyboard of an Apple computer ever since.

Robbie and his wife Hesta have two children, Bobbie and Min. Bobbie studied journalism in America and helped run a group of Chinese newspapers in Hong Kong for some decades, besides looking after the real estate that he and his sister also inherited from Father. He married Greta Lo, whom he had known since childhood; they have two sons, who are both now adults. Min was in college in the United States while Robbie was stationed at the United Nations; later she was also quite good in looking after her inheritance in Hong Kong. Finally, she returned to America, where she eventually married someone she had known since childhood. Min's husband's grandfather was an old family friend of our parents. He used to work in Hankow but later brought his family to Hong Kong, where he retired. I well remember first going with Mamma to visit him. He was completely blind and had the habit of always twirling two walnuts in his palm, to provide exercise for his fingers. The walnuts were worn smooth and had a beautiful shine. Later I sometimes visited him on my own, at Mamma's request, just to pay respects on behalf of my family in accordance with Chinese etiquette. Although he always had some member of his family with him, they were refugees in Hong Kong, and this blind old man seemed a little lonely. He and his household always welcomed my visits, and I never expected that one day we would become related through Min's marriage to his grandson. Incidentally, I also happened to become a colleague of his elder son, H.K. Kwaan, who was head of one of the departments in the Kailan Mining Administration at Tangshan. I saw him again in Beijing during my second trip there in 1978. Later, when I revisited the mines in 1981 and 1982, H.K. had died, but his son was still serving as an engineer. I have seen him and his mother every time I visit the mines. She and I continue to exchange New Year greetings, as she regards me as a "chin jia" or relative by marriage. Min and her husband, Dr Hau Ming Kwan, have two daughters and two sons.

My sister Jean, the sixth daughter, settled happily in Australia where she and her late husband Billy had sent their two children shortly before the Battle of Hong Kong broke out in 1941. When the war ended and she left the internment camp at Stanley, she asked to be sent to Australia to join her two children. Billy had also intended to join them, but it was not until Jean arrived in Sydney that Billy's sister told her the shocking news that he had been sent to Japan as a prisoner of war and had died there. It was not easy for Jean to adjust to her change of circumstances, with both the sudden death of her husband and life in a foreign country. Fortunately, with outstretched hands from many people and with her own determination and perseverance, after seven years she was able to make the adjustment and feel that she was no longer a stranger in her new country. Jean tells the story in her own book *Eastern Windows, Western Skies*. Soon after her arrival in Australia, she found a job in the Department of Pathology at the University of Melbourne and was very successful. However, there were other problems to be solved. She married again, but eventually her second husband, Serg Hohlov, and the professor for whom she had served as a "right-hand woman" both died within ten weeks of each other. She was feeling depressed, and her friends recommended that she attend an adult education course to take her mind off things. This finally led to a class on feature writing tutored by a free-lance journalist, Patrick Tennison. That proved to be one of the most sensible things she ever did. She always had a yearning to write and had much to write about, so she soon was launched on her second and more important career. She produced a succession of books, most of which are autobiographical.

When I arranged to go on my first trip to the People's Republic of China in 1972-73, I decided to take a nine-month sabbatical from my work in adult education in San Diego. First I went to Tahiti and New Zealand before going on to Australia with the main objective of visiting Jean, her two children Elizabeth and John, and their families. I was exceedingly glad to have done so and to have met all or most of the members of her clan, though some were only infants then. I stayed on for a week or so with Elizabeth and her four adopted children and had dinner with John and his wife Barbara, an excellent cook. I also visited one of my goddaughters, Mrs Greta Lo. Jean had prepared quite a reception for me and had invited a number of her friends for food and drinks. I was glad to have the opportunity of meeting them and was able to thank some of them for having been so good to Jean. Jean, who was

very proud of her house, had a lovely flat in South Yarra where I stayed for a few days. The balcony overlooked the Royal Botanical Gardens, with the city of Melbourne beyond. From it you could just glimpse the mountains near Geelong, where her son had gone to school. From her kitchen window you could see Albert Park and its lake, and on a clear day you could just make out the lighthouse at the entrance to Port Philip Heads. The flat was on about the 20th storey of the building, and the panorama was breathtaking. In later years I did not see Jean as much as I would have liked, which I suppose was to be expected, since her part of the world was a little off the beaten track. I saw her in 1972 and a few years later when we visited Yellowstone Park together, as well as a couple of times when by coincidence we were both in England. Unfortunately she had much trouble with osteosclerosis. In 1989, however, she could still enjoy a trip to Hong Kong, San Francisco, New York, and the United Kingdom. I could not go along, but I was with my sisters in spirit when I was able to speak on the telephone with each of them—Jean, Grace, and Florence—and invite them out for a Chinese dinner the next time we all met.

Jean's daughter Elizabeth took her degree in physics and immediately married Stewart Doery, whose family was in the sheep and woollen industry. When Father celebrated his 90th birthday in December 1952, they came to Hong Kong as honeymooners. That gave us a chance to meet Stewart, whom we all liked very much. We posed together for the family photo album, and Stewart fitted in well. For some medical reason, though, Stewart was infertile, so he and Elizabeth decided that they would adopt children. In Australia the regulations concerning adoptions were strict. A couple had first to be carefully screened as suitable adoptive parents and normally had to "book" the baby before its birth. Unless the baby was obviously defective in some way, the couple had to accept it whichever sex it turned out to be, except under special circumstances. The first child they adopted was a girl whom they named Alison. They wanted to have a companion for her, so they adopted another girl. Quite naturally, they wanted to have a boy as well and in due course adopted Andrew; at that stage they were quite satisfied with their little family. However, there was later another little boy who needed adoption. As Stewart and Elizabeth had obviously demonstrated that they made excellent adoptive parents, they were persuaded to take him as well, so they had a fourth child, Donald.

Unfortunately, when all the children were still quite young,



Stewart was suddenly taken ill while watching an athletic match with one of the children. He was taken to the hospital and died half a day later. Elizabeth was heartbroken, but although some people questioned whether she should bring up the children on her own, she decided it was imperative that she continue to shoulder her responsibilities and keep the family together. She did an excellent job as mother (and sometimes father) to all four children. All of them except Andrew are happily married as I write. Some of them even have children of their own. Andrew lived on with his mother, which was fortunate in one way because when Elizabeth fractured her femur in 1989, Andrew was able to cook all the meals and take good care of her. Elizabeth was a physics teacher at a secondary school and was fond of backpacking. I heard that despite her accident, she was again able to take up this activity, and I am sure she is very happy at this. She was always a most affectionate, sensible, and understanding person, even as a child. For instance, on the trip to Australia she was a veritable mother to her brother John. It is hard to believe that she turned sixty in March 1990. I can still remember seeing her as a little baby when I peeped through the keyhole at the French Hospital in Hong Kong the day she was born.

Jean's son John was a premature and delicate child, but after he went to Australia his health steadily improved. He wisely chose to become a forester and later took further training so that he could function at a higher level. He seems to have done well in his chosen career. As his wife is a Roman Catholic, they were blessed with five children. I had dinner with them in 1972, when the eldest, Jeannine, was only a few years old. Several years ago her proud grandmother sent me a newspaper clipping showing Jeannine as a mature high-school senior who had won an award. Now I hear that she is already married, and I am particularly glad to hear that she is a teacher for autistic children.

I have written a good deal about my youngest sister Florence, to whom I was a "deputy mother" for some years in my youth. In her 1990 book entitled *My Memories*, she mentions me in several incidents I had forgotten. For instance, she recalls that during our time at Lingnan I had tried to claim that we were "pure" Chinese, and that I even tried to make her claim this too, although her western looks (brown hair and eyes) soon gave her away. After reading her book, I immediately telephoned her across the Atlantic to apologise for not realising her difficulties at the time. Florence's husband, Dr K.C. Yeo, eventually

retired as director of the Medical and Health Service in Hong Kong, where he had served for some thirty years. He then went to England, where he took up a much more junior post as one of the psychiatrists in a well-known mental hospital. Later the hospital was converted to one for mentally retarded patients, so he simply changed his speciality. Finally he retired for good and spent his days like an English country gentleman, doing much volunteer work. Gardening was Florence's speciality. In Hong Kong, her African violets were always a success at bazaars. In England she worked wonders with gardens at four different homes, starting with overgrown weeds and transforming them into places of beauty, a joy to all who beheld them.

Florence and K.C. have three children. Their only son Richard (Dick) became a surgical consultant in his mid-30s and is doing excellent work in a hospital in the south of England; he often serves as a consultant elsewhere as well. His son Simon opened his own retail store, and his daughter Suzanne became a model and frequently travelled to fashion shows the world over. Florence's elder daughter, Daphne, had a secretarial career but is now retired. She has a daughter, Louise, a teacher who married in 1989. The Yeos' younger daughter, Wendy, has been a well-known artist for several decades and frequently holds exhibitions at various places such as the United Kingdom; La Jolla, California; and our old home, Hong Kong. Wendy has a little cottage in Wales where she does a good deal of sketching, and she also takes trips to various parts of Europe for the same purpose. Her son Christopher was the first of his six cousins to be married; he and his bride had a beautiful wedding in a village in Wales. The ceremony was videotaped and provided good entertainment for those of us who could not attend. Her daughter Michelle is a professional hairdresser. When I mentioned this to Vic, she remarked: "She will never get any business from me," which is true. When Vic still had her eyesight, she took pride in washing and managing her own hair, which she allowed to grow to its full length. She never used a normal shampoo and until even recently would wash her hair in a Chinese hair-washing brew made by boiling a plant product that looks like tea bricks.

When I left Britain in 1973, I took the opportunity to visit a few relatives on my husband's side and some close friends in the United States. These included my sister-in-law Mary and her husband George Y. Chen in New Jersey, and my nieces Yvonne and Rosamund (whose mother was H.H.'s elder sister) in upper New York state. Some years

later, Mary and George moved to San Diego, so as to be near me. Unfortunately, Mary developed liver trouble and finally died peacefully among us. George proved to be an excellent nurse as well as a devoted husband, taking excellent care of all her needs until the end. In September 1989, when George celebrated his 80th birthday, his daughter Diana arranged a wonderful get-together of the "inner circle" of Cheng relatives in America, including me. I was flown to New York from San Diego. Diana and her husband Gordon Chan, who had come from Alabama, rented a car, picked me up, and drove us all to Yvonne's home at Dobbs Ferry. We stayed with Yvonne, her husband Charlie Tung, and their only daughter Viveca, who has a law job in Washington. Yvonne's elder son is already married, and he came home to enjoy the birthday banquet with all of us. Rosamund and her husband, K.C. Lo, live almost in the same street as her sister, and she and Yvonne took a day's leave to be with us for the greater part of our unforgettable four-day weekend. It was a real pleasure to see these young people growing to maturity and having great success, especially with their life's work and their children. Although the brother, Benny K.S. Liang, could not come along, he phoned us during dinner, so we were all united in spirit. During the last decade and more, one of George's most useful hobbies was to combine all the details of the family trees of the descendants of the three daughters of the famous national hero, Imperial Commissioner Lin Tse-hsu. He tried to record this famous network of closely related family groups, linked together by intermarriage.

One of the reasons I left Hong Kong and relocated to San Diego was because my only child, Junie, had married in nearby La Jolla, and I wanted to spend my remaining years near her and her family. This arrangement has given me a great deal of happiness and in the winter of my years a considerable measure of comfort. It is good to have your dear ones close by when you are older. The idea of my becoming a US resident did not occur to anyone until about a year after June and her husband, Dr Walter Dandliker, a biochemist, got married and were in Hong Kong for a short visit. One of our good friends, half seriously, told Junie that she ought to sponsor her mother to live in the United States. The idea stuck in her mind and upon her return she began to make enquiries. She was told that she was not yet able to sponsor anyone because she herself was a recent US resident, but that with my qualifications, I ought to be able to apply directly, which I did. Then

came the usual form filling and bureaucracy, which was not really as bad as I had expected.

When I finally arrived in California, I stayed with Junie and her husband for a couple of weeks until some of my luggage arrived. This contained my kitchen utensils and a few household effects, including a camphorwood trunk and a red lacquer trunk that had been part of my mother-in-law's dowry when she married at the end of the 19th century. I also had three strong rattan chairs with a matching table and stool, which had been made to order for friends who gave them to me as parting gifts, and a nest of four renovated Chinese blackwood tea-tables given me by another group of professional friends. All these items have stayed with me since I arrived in San Diego in 1967; they have proved to be excellent "emotional tonics" as well as useful pieces of furniture.

I had shipped these items ahead by sea, months before I left Hong Kong, in several batches as they became available. I had already decided to donate to the Confucian school library a number of the books I had placed there. Others that were not suitable for them I decided to ship to San Diego, mainly for reference purposes. I took them to the shop and had them packed in a crate. About a week after my arrival, I asked Walter to pry open the wooden crate, which had arrived a few days earlier. I was horrified to find that it had evidently been dropped into the sea because the books were dripping wet. In those days, before containers and special wharves, cargo boats in Victoria Harbour generally anchored in midstream. Most of the loading and unloading of the cargo was done by Chinese junks tied alongside the ocean-going freighters, with workers moving the relatively smaller pieces of cargo by hand and the ship's cranes handling the larger pieces. My books had always been precious to me, and I could have wept at the sight. For the next few days, while Walter went off to work and Junie was teaching school, I spent a good deal of time trying to dry the books in the bright sunshine in their backyard. I even rang up the local library for suggestions on how to go about the task. After a few days, mildew began to set in on those that were really soaking wet, and I reluctantly had to throw several away. Fortunately, I was able to save most of them, although some lost their hard covers—which, in due course, I had rebound. One book had a special souvenir value. It had been in a bookcase in Mamma's room in the Falls during the Battle of Hong Kong, when the Japanese had bombed our house on the Peak. A piece of shrapnel entered the spine of the book and came out at the side, leaving a big

hole in its wake. I had brought the book to San Diego as a reminder of days past: of Mamma, my brothers and sisters growing up, and the end of those happy days that preceded the Japanese invasion and occupation of the colony.

Shortly after my arrival, Junie took me out house-hunting. We looked at several apartments, but I easily decided on a first floor apartment in Loring Street that had many appealing qualities: it was about ten minutes by car from Junie's home and within half-an-hour's walk from the Pacific Ocean. There were shops nearby on a wide street; above all, the flat had windows on three sides and the door opened onto the fourth. I could see the sunrise from the back porch, and I could also enjoy the sunset until a new condominium later blocked that view. I liked that apartment very much and stayed there for sixteen years. The landlady later sold the building and the new landlord kept raising the rent. I then moved a couple of times, until my daughter and son-in-law decided to buy the two-bedroom condominium where I currently live; they realised I had considerable difficulty finding suitable accommodation with a rent I could afford and so charged me a special rate I could afford

Junie now helps me in so many ways. Every few days she rings me up, and I read her my shopping list, telling her what I need. She brings it to me free of charge. I do not drive now because in recent times I had a number of mishaps in my car. I sorely miss this convenience because I had been driving since 1953. That is the trouble with growing old; you inevitably lose the ability to get around as much as you would like and end up spending too much time with your memories. However, if you combine those reminiscences with an old lady's fascination with a computer, you could, like me, end up with a book of sorts. Thank you for reading it.

